

AIRPOWER VERSUS TERRORISM:
THREE CASE STUDIES

BY

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DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the effectiveness of airpower versus terrorism using three case studies. The first case study is America's response to Libyan state-sponsored terrorism, Operation El Dorado Canyon. The second case study is America's cruise missile response to the 1998 al Qaeda bombings of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, Operation Infinite Reach. The final case study is the Israeli use of airpower versus the current (second) Palestinian Intifada. Each of the case studies addresses multiple common questions: what was the context; why was airpower selected; how was airpower employed; what were the objectives and were they achieved; and finally what lessons learned emerge. Additionally, each case study looks at the impact of military action on domestic opinion and third party opinions. Overall, these three case studies reveal a spectrum of responses with which states can respond to terrorism. Operation Infinite Reach shows that when a nation is unwilling to commit itself seriously against an enemy, the message it sends is one of timidity and inaction. Operation El Dorado Canyon was a significant airpower response that showed Qadhafi that his support of terrorism would not be without cost. Further, Libya offered multiple high-value targets that could be destroyed – thus revealing a major weakness of states that sponsor of terrorism. The Israeli use of air and ground power to combat terrorism has been effective, but this case also shows that military power alone cannot stop terrorism, at some point diplomacy must prevail.

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Chapter 1

TERRORISM: IT'S IMPACT, THE NEW AMERICAN APPROACH AND AIRPOWER

Introduction

Our war on terror begins with al-Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.

President George W. Bush
Address to the Joint Session of Congress
20 September 2001

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 served as a rude wake-up call to America. Terrorism was not an irritant that would “just go away.” In the short span of one morning, this all became crystal clear. President Bush announced to a stunned and outraged nation that, “Freedom and democracy are under attack.”¹ Akin to Franklin D. Roosevelt’s address to the Congress following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, President Bush subsequently declared war on terrorism. Further, he warned the nation that, “Freedom and fear are at war, and there will be no quick or easy end to this conflict.”² Secretary of State Colin Powell indicated that the scope of tools used to wage this new war will be all-encompassing. Supporting this, in the *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, Powell said, “We and our Coalition partners must be prepared to conduct a . . . campaign . . . with every tool of statecraft-political, diplomatic, legal, economic, financial, intelligence, and when necessary, military.”³

Airpower, a key element of the military tool, has, and will, continue to play a vital role in this war against terrorism. RAND’s *Countering the New Terrorism* discusses the unique capabilities airpower brings to the war on terror:

¹ United States Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: May 2002), 1.

² The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington D.C.: September 2002), 7.

³ *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, iii.

“Airpower offers a flexible, timely strike capability, including a new generation of highly discriminate weapons. It also affords the least politically risky of the military options for striking back at terror, because it does not entail putting troops on the ground or moving significant naval asset in harm’s way. Moreover, the high speed of response associated with air power will become increasingly important as terrorists acquire the capabilities to move swiftly from one theater to another and to attack with little or no warning. Thus, the USAF, with the strike capabilities afforded by air-launched cruise missiles and other smart munitions, should be considered a natural, leading element in any proactive strategy for countering terror. Beyond direct bombardment, the USAF can provide tactical mobility for special forces teams-and give them close support-should they be called upon to strike directly at key terrorist nodes.”⁴

This work will analyze three case studies where airpower was employed to combat terrorism. The first case study is Operation El Dorado Canyon where American airpower struck Libya for its role in state-sponsored terrorism. The second is the 1998 cruise missile response to the US Embassy bombings in Africa. The final case study will examine the Israeli’s use of airpower versus terrorism with a focus on the current Palestinian intifada. The central answer being sought in these case studies is how effective has airpower been in combating terrorism? To accomplish this, several questions will be consistently explored. For example, what was the context of each case? Why was airpower selected? How was airpower employed? What were the objectives and were they achieved? Other questions such as what enhances and what limits airpower will be addressed. Also, what lessons learned have emerged? Finally, these case studies will be analyzed to draw conclusions about the most appropriate and effective uses of airpower versus terrorism.

The subject of this thesis does not imply that airpower is the *best* military tool to combat terrorism. The author does not believe that military strikes alone can win this war on terrorism. However, it is obvious that, as President Bush says, the way to win the war against terrorism is to make use of “every resource at our command.”⁵ With this said, airpower has been called upon in the past, is currently being used to combat terrorism and will certainly be used in the future to combat terrorism. Understanding this, it becomes

⁴ Ian O. Lesser et al., *Countering the New Terrorism* (Santa Monica, CA.: RAND, 1999), 79.

⁵ *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, iii.

apparent that exploring the effective uses of airpower against terrorism is an important issue.

Terrorism and Its Implications

In October 2002, the State Department released a chronology of “major terror events” since 1961.⁶ The first incident listed was a hijacking of a National Airlines airplane in 1961. Since then, the State Department lists 105 global incidences of terrorism. Of these 105 incidences, 65 of these major terrorism events involved United States citizens.⁷ Americans have been and continue to be the targets of numerous major terrorism attacks.

The September 11, 2001 attacks served as a rude awakening to the United States and the world, which vividly showed the threat that terrorism posed. In President Bush’s words, members of Al Qaeda were able to bring “great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank.”⁸ First and foremost, the loss of life – approximately 3000 dead - was staggering.⁹ Economically, the attacks were massive. According to Ambassador Francis X. Taylor, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, a month after the 9/11 attacks “200,000 people were laid off . . . including close to 40,000 in the aerospace industry.”¹⁰ Further, the airline industry “may have lost \$15 billion” while New York City lost an estimated “\$1.7 billion in lost sales and \$1.75 billion in lost rent by the end of FY 2003.”¹¹ Finally, Ambassador Taylor indicated that the “world’s insurance industry took an estimated \$50 billion hit.”¹² The *Associated Press* reported in late 2001 that, “The shock was most acute in the United States, but the impact rumbled across the globe in a massive military mobilization . . . [and] in the accelerated decline of

⁶ “4 Decades of Worldwide Terrorism,” *AIR FORCE Magazine*, February 2002, 70.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, introduction.

⁹ *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, xxi.

¹⁰ “Impact of Global Terrorism,” U.S. Department of State, 4 pages, on-line, Internet, 11 Dec 2002, available from <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rm/8839.htm>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

the world economy. . . .”¹³ Juan Somavia, director general of the International Labor Organization stated, “We are staring into the face of the first synchronized world recession of the globalization era.”¹⁴ World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn said, “Weakening global growth, falling commodity prices, increased refugee flows, and loss of tourism earnings will adversely affect most of the world’s poorest countries, and keep millions of people from climbing out of poverty.”¹⁵ All of this supports Secretary of State Powell’s argument that, “Terrorism not only kills people [*sic*]. It also threatens democratic institutions, undermines economies, and destabilizes regions.” It also supports the notion that the world irrevocably changed on 9/11 – terrorism finally achieved the ability to have a massive and global impact with a single attack. It is also disconcerting that, “Thousands of trained terrorists remain at large with cells in North America, South America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and across Asia.”¹⁶ Perhaps what scares people most is the possibility of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

The world was first introduced to the use of WMD for terrorism in 1995 when the Shinri-kyu cult used Sarin nerve gas to kill 12 people and wound 5,700 in the Tokyo subway system.¹⁷ President Bush has made it clear that he intends to stop terrorists from acquiring or employing WMD against the United States or other nations.¹⁸ As the National Security Strategy (NSS) states, “The gravest danger our Nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination. The United States will not allow these efforts to succeed.”¹⁹

¹³ Robert Barr, “Global Impact of Sept. 11 Attacks,” *Associated Press*, 31 December 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 11 December 2002, available from <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2001/12/19/2001/main321900.shtml>.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 5.

¹⁷ “4 Decades of Worldwide Terrorism,” 73.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, introduction.

The New American Counterterrorism Policy

America's counterterrorism approach has changed. Clearly, one impetus for this change is the 9/11 attacks. One significant factor is the change in leadership in the White House. Greg Miller of the *Los Angeles Times* quotes an administration official as saying, "We've got new authorities, new tools and a new willingness to do it [fight terrorism] wherever it has to be done."²⁰ Miller remarks, "The U.S. shift...shows the Bush administration has rejected the long-held American view that refraining from violence offers at least some protection from retaliation."²¹ Some contend that this new offensive doctrine is not without risks. Miller quotes a former CIA official as saying, "It may be the right policy, but it's not going to be without consequences."²² However, others rightly claim "restraint earned America no protection from Al Qaeda" This adds to the conclusion that, as Miller quotes a former CIA official, "The fact is, we've been getting shot at for the last 30 to 40 years. The weaker they think you are, the more they'll go after us."²³

This new aggressive approach of counterterrorism has been labeled the "Bush Doctrine" which makes it clear that terrorists of "global reach" will be sought, targeted and "preemptively" engaged.²⁴ According to President Bush, "We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. So we must be prepared to defeat our enemies' plans, using the best intelligence and proceeding with deliberation. History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action."²⁵ Specifically, according to the NSS, the new "priority will be first to disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations of global reach and attack their leadership; command, control, and communications; material support; and finances. This will have a disabling effect upon

²⁰ Greg Miller, "Despite the Accuracy of Strike in Yemen, Risks Remain," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 November 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 7 November 2002, available from <http://ebird.dtic.mil/Nov2002/e20021106despite.htm>.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, introduction.

the terrorists' ability to plan and operate."²⁶ Addressing WMD, President Bush proclaimed "as a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed."²⁷ The NSS contends that to execute preemptive action "we will continue to transform our military forces to ensure our ability to conduct rapid and precise operations to achieve decisive results."²⁸ Airpower, with its inherent speed, range, stealth, and precision weapons employment capabilities clearly will be an important tool supporting this new "Bush Doctrine."

A Common Understanding: Terminology

Before progressing, key terms need to be defined. Terrorism, international terrorism and terrorist groups will be defined using the definitions found in Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f(d).²⁹ "*Terrorism* means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. The term *international terrorism* means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country. The term *terrorist group* means any group practicing, or that has significant subgroups that practice, international terrorism."³⁰ While understanding these terms and their meanings, it is important to have an understanding of the terminology this thesis will use in describing the airpower strategies that can be employed against an opponent.

In his book, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*, Robert Pape offers four broad coercion strategies that airpower can employ against the enemy. While designed more for conventional conflicts, his terms offer a worthwhile method for discussing different strategies discussed in this thesis.

Pape's first form of airpower coercion is "punishment." He says, "Punishment strategies seek to inflict enough pain on enemy civilians to overwhelm their territorial

²⁶ *ibid*, 5.

²⁷ *ibid*.

²⁸ *ibid*, 16.

²⁹ These are the definitions used by the United States Department of State. See *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, xvi.

³⁰ *ibid*.

interest in the dispute. The hope is that the government will concede or the population will revolt.”³¹ The punishment approach rears from the early days of airpower where early airpower leaders such as Duohet, Trenchard and the officer’s assigned to the U.S. Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) believed that airpower could decisively influence the *will* of the people.³²

The second airpower strategy that Pape identifies is one involving “risk.” Pape attributes this concept largely to the work of Thomas Schelling and his book *Arms and Influence*.³³ According to Pape, “The heart of this strategy is to raise the risk of civilian damage slowly, compelling the opponent to concede to avoid suffering future costs.”³⁴ While the punishment strategy applies overwhelming force in “all-out attacks,” the risk strategy holds what the enemy cherishes as *hostage* and relies upon a gradual escalation of force.³⁵ Critical to the risk approach is that the “coercer must signal clearly that the bombing is contingent on the opponent’s behavior and will be stopped upon compliance with the coercer’s demands.” The American Rolling Thunder bombing campaign in Vietnam from 1965 to 1968 serves as an excellent example of a risk strategy.³⁶ A more recent (and successful) example of a risk strategy was the use of airpower in 1999 that compelled the former Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, to agree to NATO demands regarding Serbian involvement in Kosovo.³⁷

The third airpower strategy offered by Pape is “denial.” “Using air power for *denial* entails smashing enemy military forces, weakening them to the point where friendly ground forces can seize disputed territories without suffering unacceptable losses. . . . [D]enial campaigns generally center on destruction of arms manufacturing,

³¹ Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Press, 1996), 21.

³² See Pape, Chapter 3.

³³ Pape, 66.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ Pape, 67.

³⁶ Pape, 68.

³⁷ According to Stephen Hosmer of RAND, “Milosevic was under increasing pressure-particularly from his closest associates-to agree to a settlement that would halt the bombing. Much of the impulse for this pressure seems to have resulted from NATO attacks on six types of largely “dual use” infrastructure targets: command, control and communication (C3), electric power, industrial plant, leadership, lines of communication (LOCs), and petroleum, oil, and lubricant (POL) facilities-the bulk of which were located in Serbia, the area of transcending political importance to Milosevic and his colleagues. See Stephen T. Hosmer, *The Conflict Over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did* (Santa Monica, CA.: RAND, 2001), xvi.

interdiction of supplies from homefront to battlefield, disruption of movement and communication in theater, and attrition of fielded forces.”³⁸ A recent example of a denial campaign is the initial use of airpower in Afghanistan in Operation Enduring Freedom. In this case, airpower helped destroy Taliban forces, which removed Al Qaeda’s state supporter and resultant safe haven.

Finally, Pape’s last airpower strategy is “decapitation.” “The use of air power for *decapitation*-a strategy spawned by precision guided munitions and used against Iraq [during Operation Desert Storm]-strikes against key leadership and telecommunications facilities. The main assumption is that these targets are a modern state’s Achilles’ heel.”³⁹ An attractive feature of decapitation via airpower is that direct targeting of leadership with precision guided munitions (PGMs) do not necessarily entail large force-on-force scenarios thereby minimizing cost, damage, and loss of life.⁴⁰

An Early Example of Airpower Versus Terrorism

One of the first cases of airpower versus terrorism was carried out in 1916 by the United States Army Air Service’s First Aero Squadron while helping search for Pancho Villa. During this period, Mexico was embroiled in conflict by different factions fighting for power.⁴¹ Having been ousted from power, Villa and his supporters fled to regroup in northern Mexico.⁴² President Woodrow Wilson dealt a blow to Villa’s cause by recognizing his opponent, Venustiano Carranza, as the “legitimate ruler of Mexico.”⁴³ “Villa knew that his only hope for victory lay in forcing American intervention in Mexico, which he in turn hoped would trigger a revolt among the peasants of Chihuahua, many of whom regarded the charismatic guerilla leader as a folk hero. With this in mind, Villa and a large band of horsemen stopped a train in Mexico on January 11, 1916, and executed 19 of the Americans on board.”⁴⁴ Two months later, Villa’s men crossed into

³⁸ Pape, 69.

³⁹ Pape, 79.

⁴⁰ Pape, 80.

⁴¹ Gary Glynn, “1st Aero Squadron in Pursuit of Pancho Villa,” *The History Net*, n.p., on-line, Internet, 18 December 2002, available from <http://military.history.about.com/library/prm/blpanchovilla1.htm>

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

Columbus, New Mexico, and killed 17 Americans and lay fire to the town.⁴⁵ After panic erupted along the border, President Wilson asked Carranza's permission to "send U.S. troops into the territory" to which Carranza agreed, but stipulated that the mission was "for the sole purpose of capturing the bandit Villa."⁴⁶ With this, Wilson ordered Gen "Black Jack" Pershing and a force of over 6,000 soldiers south of the border to pursue Villa.⁴⁷ "One of Pershing's first acts was to order the 1st Aero Squadron to New Mexico which they did on March 13, 1916."⁴⁸

What is ironic, is that given the "peerless" status of our Air Force today, in 1913, just three years prior to the Mexico campaign, when "[compared] to what other governments invested in their military air effort . . . the United States came in thirteenth in the world rankings."⁴⁹ With this, the 1st Aero Squadron's commanding officer, Captain Benjamin Foulois, led a well intentioned, but ill-prepared and poorly equipped group of fledgling aviators into the first American air combat endeavor.⁵⁰ One of the squadron pilots, Edgar Gorrell, noted that the squadron "was in horrible shape. The airplanes were not fit for military service, especially along the border. Some of us carried pistols, and two fliers had .22 rifles."⁵¹ Untested aviation procedures, maintenance problems, crashes, a hostile climate and indigenous population proved formidable obstacles.⁵² During the campaign, the squadron flew 540 missions, but had a relatively minor impact on the campaign and Villa was never captured.⁵³ The significance of this event in history is not the mission effectiveness of this campaign but, rather, that it was America's first airpower foray into these types of operations – something that airpower is well suited to execute today.⁵⁴ While the 1st Aero Squadron's primary mission was to perform reconnaissance, airpower offers a variety of significant capabilities that can be utilized to combat terrorism.⁵⁵

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Robert P. White, *Mason Patrick and the Fight for Air Service Independence* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2001), 8.

⁵⁰ Glynn, n.p.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Note, the first use of airpower versus terrorism was the French use of aviation to quell rebel tribes in Morocco in 1913. James Corum and Wray Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars* (Lawrence, KS.: 2003), 1.

⁵⁵ 1st Aero Squadron's reconnaissance role from Dr. Corum.

Chapter 2

EL DORADO CANYON: AIRPOWER VERSUS LIBYAN SPONSORED TERRORISM

Introduction

Every Libyan must take up guns, bombs, and with their guns and bombs they will teach a lesson to America. We will teach a lesson to America greater than the Vietnam lesson. We have fought alongside Nicaragua because they are fighting America. Nicaragua is fighting near its borders. The American people will be strangled. We are working to build a wide front of people who are against America, Iran revolutionaries, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Cuba, Namibia, Palestine, South Africa, Northern Ireland-we will form a wide integrated front which encircles imperialism.

Colonel Moammar Qadhafi
1984

We Americans are slow to anger. We always seek peaceful avenues before resorting to the use of force-and we did. We tried quiet diplomacy, public condemnation, economic sanctions, and demonstrations of military force. None succeeded. Despite our repeated warnings, Ghadafi continued his reckless policy of intimidation, his relentless pursuit of terror. He counted on America to be passive. He counted wrong.

President Ronald Reagan
April, 1986

By the early 1980s, relations between Libya and America had soured. Former Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger typified Washington's view of the Libyan leader by describing him as a "theatrically posturing, fake mystic, with a considerable dollop of madness thrown in."⁵⁶ Events set Washington and Tripoli on a collision course for violence. When the collision did occur, the world was shocked. Says George J. Church, "Despite years of agonizing Western debate about combating terrorism, months of mostly fruitless diplomatic maneuvering, weeks of U.S. warnings and finally days of

⁵⁶ Caspar W. Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace* (New York, NY.: Warner Books, 1990), 175.

ominous silence, the world still seemed unprepared when the bombers struck.”⁵⁷ What, then, were the events that led to Operation El Dorado Canyon?

Background

In 1981, Qadhafi had been the Libyan leader for twelve years.⁵⁸ For years, Qadhafi had been spending Libya’s oil and gas earnings building a robust military.⁵⁹ Further, according to Caspar Weinberger, “Qaddafi had long maintained claims, insupportable under international law, that he controlled the entire Gulf of Sidra, the great body of



Figure 1. Libya

Source: Map of Libya Used by permission of the General Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, on-line, Internet, 18 Mar 2002, available from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia02/libya_sm02.gif.

⁵⁷ George J. Church, “Hitting the Source,” *Time Magazine*, 28 April, 1986, 17.

⁵⁸ Weinberger, 175. Also, the reader will note that there are a variety of ways to spell Qadhafi.

⁵⁹ *ibid*, 176.

Mediterranean water that lies between Tripoli and Benghazi north of Libya, and that everything within the Gulf should be considered Libyan territory.”⁶⁰ When Qadhafi issued his famous proclamation that the line below 32 degrees 30 minutes would be enforced as a “line of death,” Weinberger “concluded that we would have to ignore these claims, and continue planned exercises for that region.”⁶¹ On the night of 18 August 1981, Libyan SU-22 fighters engaged two US Navy F-14s that were below “the line of death” and were promptly shot down.⁶² Tensions continued to rise until 1986, when the US Navy began their nineteenth exercise since 1981 in the area and the eighth time that American forces would operate below the 32 degrees 30 minutes line.⁶³ On 24 March, portions of the US Navy’s Task Force 60, under command of Vice Admiral Frank B. Kelso, crossed Qadhafi’s “line of death.”⁶⁴ This time, Qadhafi chose to defend his claimed territory in earnest. When the US Navy decided to depart above the “line of death” three days later, it left behind several sunken Libyan warships as well as one destroyed SA-5 missile battery.⁶⁵ President Reagan reminded the world that the “American exercises in the Gulf of Sidra were standard procedure. ‘So it wasn’t an unusual thing we set out to do. And he did open hostilities and we closed them.’”⁶⁶ Says Weinberger, “Qaddafi now turned to the use of terrorism to try to secure some advantage and escape from the continued humiliation he suffered as the world perceived how idle were his threats, and unequal his courage, for taking any military action to match his words.”⁶⁷

Three days after the US Navy departed, Qadhafi called upon all Arabs to seek revenge against the Americans including, in his own words, “an interest, goods, ship, plane or person.”⁶⁸ However, in 1986, Qadhafi was certainly not new to the world of terrorism. For years Libya had been deeply involved in aiding, training and planning terrorist activities. Besides training over 8,000 terrorists annually, Libya provided them

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ *ibid.* Also, Daniel P. Bolger, *Americans at War: 1975-1986, An Era of Violent Peace* (Novato, CA.: Presidio Press, 1988), 388.

⁶² Weinberger, 177.

⁶³ *ibid.*, 183.

⁶⁴ Bolger, 393.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 400.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 401.

⁶⁷ Weinberger, 187.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

with the ways and means to execute their attacks. In its support for terrorism, only Iran exceeded Libya.⁶⁹ Qadhafi had enlisted the aid of international terrorist Abu Nidal and his Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) well before his embarrassing defeat in the Gulf of Sidra.⁷⁰ Nidal and his FRC had a long string of horrendous terrorists accomplishments from the 1972 Murder of Israeli Olympic athletes to the Christmas 1985 murders in the Rome and Vienna airports that killed nineteen and wounded 117 innocent travelers.⁷¹ Goading the world, Qadhafi praised these attacks and acknowledged that he sheltered members of the FRC.⁷² Clearly, terrorism was becoming more and more of a problem. Western nations were becoming increasingly alarmed at the frequency and severity of terrorism attacks.⁷³ In 1970, there were 300 such attacks, by 1985, the number had risen to 3,000.⁷⁴ Former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, said, “The phenomenon of the terrorist state which projects violence against its enemies across the globe, using surrogates wherever possible, is one in which earlier generations never confronted. The means required to crush this kind of threat to world order and peace are bound to be different too.”⁷⁵ It appears that Thatcher had come to realize that something new had to be done to curb state-sponsored terrorism.

American actions to this point to stop the escalating terror had been non-violent. President Reagan received little international support in his efforts to pressure Qadhafi to change his ways. On 7 Jan 1985, he imposed economic sanctions on Libya and asked for western European nations to follow suit.⁷⁶ The European leaders ignored Reagan’s request.⁷⁷ Members of Reagan’s administration were becoming exasperated.⁷⁸

President Reagan and the administration had had enough. “Within days of the battle in the Gulf of Sidra, a senior U.S. official vowed, ‘The next act of terrorism will

⁶⁹ Walter J. Boyne, “El Dorado Canyon,” *Air Force Magazine*, March 1999, 58.

⁷⁰ Bolger, 383. Also, Boyne, 58.

⁷¹ Bolger, 385-86.

⁷² *ibid*, 386.

⁷³ Boyne, 58.

⁷⁴ *ibid*.

⁷⁵ Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Years* (New York, NY.: HarperCollins, 1993), 444.

⁷⁶ *ibid*, 442.

⁷⁷ *ibid*, 442.

⁷⁸ Church, 24.

bring the hammer down' on Libya.”⁷⁹ Before President Reagan could authorize the use of force against Libya, he required direct proof to secure domestic support.⁸⁰ However, when this proof came, the American military would be ready. Finally, Libya provided the “smoking gun” required by President Reagan for military retaliation.

American intelligence intercepts revealed that Qadhafi and his regime were instructing their terror organizations to attack locations where Americans congregated.⁸¹ “On Friday evening, April 4, the East Berlin people’s bureau [embassy] sent Tripoli a cable declaring, ‘We have something planned that will make you happy It will happen soon, the bomb will blow [*sic*], American soldiers must be hit.”⁸² In the early morning hours of the next day, a Libyan placed bomb exploded in the La Belle Club discotheque that was a favorite of American servicemen.⁸³ The blast killed two American soldiers, a Turkish woman, and wounded 229 others of which 79 were Americans.⁸⁴ Shortly after the blast, American intelligence decoded another message from the Libyan Embassy in East Berlin sent to Tripoli saying, “An event occurred. You will be pleased with the result.”⁸⁵ Secretary of State George Schultz told Reagan, “We’ve taken enough punishment and beating. We have to act.”⁸⁶ Caspar Weinberger said, “In short, this time we have our proof. And so we decided to give the focused response to terrorism that we had always planned to deliver when our proof was clear.”⁸⁷ President Reagan said that “[w]e had irrefutable proof that Colonel Qadhafi was responsible for bombing the disco” and that “[w]e had to show him he couldn’t get away from such things.”⁸⁸ Reportedly, the president told an aide on 7 April that it was time to “[t]ry to make the world smaller for the terrorists.”⁸⁹

Now that the decision to act had been made, time became a crucial factor.

⁷⁹ Brian L. Davis, *Qaddafi, Terrorism, and the Origins of the U.S. Attack on Libya* (New York, NY.: Praeger Publishers, 1990), 115.

⁸⁰ Bolger, 387.

⁸¹ Davis, 115.

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ Bolger, 404.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*; and Davis, 116.

⁸⁵ Bolger, 404.

⁸⁶ Davis, 119.

⁸⁷ Weinberger, 188.

⁸⁸ Ronald Reagan, *Speaking My Mind* (New York, NY.: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 285.

⁸⁹ Davis, 119.

“One key consideration was intelligence concerning continuing Libyan plotting against the United States worldwide. A rocket explosion near the American embassy in Beirut early on April 6 was traced to Libya; there were unclaimed bombings directed against the United States in Bangkok and Stockholm on April 7 and 8, respectively. Libyan plots were discovered for an attack on the U.S. consulate in Munich and for the bombing of the U.S. chancery and embassy and kidnapping of the American ambassador in an African country. Orders from Tripoli were issued for striking U.S. international air carriers, and numerous other plots were in motion for attacks on American embassies and individuals in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, where a car with Libyan diplomatic tags was found trailing a bus filled with American school children. Reagan was incensed by these plans.”⁹⁰

Further, Qadhafi, reacting to reports in the American press of the possibility of military retaliation, raised the possibility of seizing American and European citizens in Libya as hostages and moving them onto likely U.S. Strike objectives.⁹¹

Based on the lack of support for economic sanctions earlier suggested against Libya, it is not surprising that nearly all of the Europeans chose not to support a military response. Of the Europeans, only the British supported military action.⁹² This would play a critical role in the planning and execution for Operation El Dorado Canyon. Globally, America seemed to go it alone. Only Israel and Canada supported the use of force.⁹³

The Selection of Airpower

It quickly became apparent that the military response could be best carried out by airpower, in fact, it was the only option seriously considered.⁹⁴ For instance, four of the five the proposed targets were within the range of the US Navy’s battleships, but none were on station with the Sixth Fleet at the time.⁹⁵ Vice Admiral Kelso, who had been placed in charge of El Dorado Canyon, had three alternatives with which to execute the attack.⁹⁶ The first option was to use SEAL Teams or Army Special Forces to conduct raids utilizing helicopters, small surface boats or scuba infiltration. This option was ruled out due to the

⁹⁰ *ibid*, 121.

⁹¹ Bolger, 406.

⁹² Thatcher, 446.

⁹³ Church, 17.

⁹⁴ Davis, 119.

⁹⁵ Bolger, 411.

⁹⁶ *ibid*, 407 and 414.

lengthy planning and complex execution and the possibility of high friendly casualties.⁹⁷ The second option was to use BGM-109C Tomahawk missiles, but cruise missiles had been decided against in early operational planning.⁹⁸ During the Gulf of Sidra actions in March both Tomahawks and B-52s were ruled out due to their strategic roles. It was seen that using these assets was an unnecessary security risk when other assets could be used. The chief fear was that if these weapons were somehow captured, they would be turned over to the Russians and compromised.⁹⁹ The third and final option was to use sea and land-based airpower.¹⁰⁰ With this, Kelso turned to airpower. Airpower offered the qualities of a quick, precise and punishing attack.¹⁰¹

The Objectives

Using airpower to deliver his message, President Reagan wanted to show Qadhafi “he couldn’t get away with such things.”¹⁰² Moments after the air attack, he addressed the Nation and indicated that, “We believe this preemptive action against his terrorist installations will not only diminish Col Qadhafi’s capacity to export terror, it will provide him with incentives and reasons to alter his criminal behavior. I have no illusion that tonight’s action will bring down the curtain on Qadhafi’s reign of terror.”¹⁰³

Secretary of Defense Weinberger echoed President Reagan’s stated objectives by saying, “The purpose of our plan was to teach Qaddafi and others the lesson that the practice of terrorism would not be free of cost to themselves; that indeed they would pay a terrible price for practicing it.”¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, he noted that the “President’s goal was to preempt, or disrupt, and discourage further Libyan operations abroad and to teach Qaddafi a lesson that the practice of state-sponsored terrorism carried a high cost.”¹⁰⁵ As mentioned, various Libyan acts of terror were planned but *not yet* executed. Hopefully, the strong message to Qadhafi would force him to call off these terror operations.¹⁰⁶

Another objective or motive for the bombing appears plausible. Reagan’s advisors hoped that this attack would energize the Europeans to take a stand against terrorism.¹⁰⁷ Clearly, Reagan could exert greater leverage against Qadhafi if he had European support for diplomatic, economic initiatives, etc.

How Airpower Was Employed

⁹⁷ *ibid*, 411 and 414.

⁹⁸ *ibid*, 414.

⁹⁹ *ibid*, 388.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*, 411.

¹⁰¹ *ibid*, 414.

¹⁰² Reagan, 285.

¹⁰³ *ibid*, 288.

¹⁰⁴ Weinberger, 189.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*, 193.

¹⁰⁶ Bolger, 406.

¹⁰⁷ Church, 27. This is also supported by Brian L. Davis. He says, “An ancillary motive for bombing Libya was to shock the Europeans out of their torpid posture, although others who supported the attack feared it could be counterproductive in those respects.” See Davis, 123.

As noted, General Rogers of EUCOM gave command responsibilities for El Dorado Canyon to Vice Admiral Kelso, who had commanded the Sixth Fleet's recent combat operations in the Gulf of Sidra.¹⁰⁸ Kelso and his staff, aided by EUCOM, set out to build their plan.¹⁰⁹ Time was of the essence, the strike had to commence prior to Qadhafi rounding up westerners to use as human shields as well as renewed Libyan terrorism attacks.¹¹⁰ Remembering the poor results that occurred during the previous US Navy attacks in Lebanon, President Reagan gave Admiral Kelso control of the planning and execution of the attack.¹¹¹ This time, there would be little outside interference in the planning process.¹¹²

President Reagan provided overall targeting guidance. Caspar Weinberger noted that the President "was always most insistent that each target be clearly associated with the Libyan-employed, Libyan-trained terrorist, and that we take all possible precautions to avoid any casualties or danger to civilians."¹¹³ Five targets were selected. Four dealt directly with Qadhafi's terrorism operations and the fifth was struck to protect the strike force.¹¹⁴ Thus, President Reagan's mechanism for change was based upon a denial strategy designed to smash the assets Qadhafi used to support terrorism. According to Weinberger, the targets were:

1. "The facilities at Murrat Sidi Bilal were known to be a swimmers/commando training school.
2. The Azziziyah barracks were the command, control and communications center for Libya's terrorist related activities.
3. The Tripoli International Airport had Libya's IL-76/CANDID large transport planes and also was identified as a terrorist logistics 'node.'
4. The Benghazi barracks housed many of Qaddafi's elite guards, and others involved in terrorist activities.
5. The Benina Airfield was not directly tied to terrorist activity, but was targeted to ensure that the Libyan air defense forces did not intercept our strike force."¹¹⁵

The level of punishment sought drove the strike force composition. The administration wanted the attack to be punishing with significant damage to the targets.¹¹⁶ It was felt that a pinprick attack would have negligible deterrent value and might be turned by Qadhafi into a victory for Libya.¹¹⁷ Thus, the strike force needed to be robust. It was also apparent that the strike should occur at night. One of President Reagan's guidelines was that the attack should be planned to minimize the risk for the American aircrewmembers. The 1983 US Navy attacks in Syria showed that attacking during daylight significantly increased the risk. In that raid, a shoulder-fired missile downed an American jet after being visually acquired.¹¹⁸ The Sixth Fleet

¹⁰⁸ Bolger, 407.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, 416.

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ Weinberger, 190.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, 192.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Davis, 120.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, 119.

only had twenty A-6s on hand for the attack – the need to deliver precision munitions at night ruled out the F-18s and A-7s.¹¹⁹ This precision delivery requirement was driven by President Reagan’s desire to minimize civilian casualties.¹²⁰ To fill the gap, General Rogers offered the use of F-111s stationed in the United Kingdom.¹²¹ General Rogers also wanted potential foes to know that the threat of US airpower was not limited to the times when the US fleet was close by.¹²² The F-111s provided something else as well. The press, the Libyans, and the world were transfixed on the Sixth Fleet.¹²³ Admiral Kelso recognized that he could not hide the significant American naval movements from the press.¹²⁴ However, while the Libyans were anticipating a strike from the US Navy, they were not suspecting a backdoor, low-level ingress from the F-111s.¹²⁵ Masterfully, Kelso turned a weakness into a strength.¹²⁶

The final strike force was comprised of F-111s and A-6s as strikers, EF-111s and EA-6Bs acting as jammers, A-7s and F-18s suppressing Libyan air defenses and F-14s providing fleet support. USAF KC-10s and KC-135s supported the United Kingdom based F-111s and EF-111s for air refueling and aid in navigation.¹²⁷ In sum, El Dorado Canyon employed over 100 strike and support aircraft from two different regions (Europe and the Mediterranean).¹²⁸ These aircraft compose two strike packages – one Air Force and the other Navy.¹²⁹

Desire to minimize collateral damage drove tight rules of engagement (ROE) for when the aircrews were allowed to release their ordinance.¹³⁰ Admiral Kelso limited the crews to a single target run.¹³¹ Further, he insisted that crews achieve one hundred percent target identification with all on-board target acquisition systems.¹³² Finally, crews were prohibited from dropping if there were any aircraft malfunctions that impacted the precision capabilities.¹³³

To maintain the element of surprise, split-second execution was essential.¹³⁴ The time over target (TOT) was set for 0200, 15 April, Libya time.¹³⁵ Unfortunately for the F-111s, France and Spain refused a overflight rights (that would have led to a direct route to the Mediterranean) – rather, the F-111s had to enter the Mediterranean through the Straits of Gibraltar which added hours of extra flight time to each leg

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ *ibid.* Also, Boyne, 60.

¹²² Davis, 121.

¹²³ Bolger, 417.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*

¹²⁵ *ibid.*

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁷ Boyne, 60. Also, Bolger, 418-423.

¹²⁸ Bolger, 416.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, 415.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² *ibid.*

¹³³ *ibid.*

¹³⁴ Weinberger, 199.

¹³⁵ Bolger, 429.

of the mission.¹³⁶ All told, they flew over 6,400 miles round-trip, which took 13 hours of flight time and up to 13 air refuelings.¹³⁷ To make this TOT [time over target], the Air Force component based in the UK had to begin departing at 1913 Tripoli time (1713 UK time).¹³⁸ 150 miles north of Libya in the Mediterranean, the Sixth Fleet began launching aircraft just after the stroke of midnight.¹³⁹ As a credit to the airmen involved, the strike packages were over their targets within a few seconds of their planned TOTs.¹⁴⁰

As the strike aircraft raced towards their targets, they faced a vast array of enemy air defenses. Qadhafi had purchased ZSU-23 anti-aircraft guns, SA-2, SA-3, SA-6, SA-8, and French Crotale missiles.¹⁴¹ Having been on alert since 3 April, the Libyan air-defense gunners on the night of the strike were more fatigued than ready.¹⁴² However, the Libyan air defense operators that did turn on their radars were quickly hammered by High Speed Anti-Radiation Missiles (HARMs) fired by the F-18 and A-7s.¹⁴³ Said one Navy pilot, “If they turned them on [their radars] to guide their missiles, they would get a HARM down their throat.”¹⁴⁴ All of this resulted in remarkably low casualties for the strike aircraft. All told, one F-111 was lost.

Caspar Weinberger summarized the bombing effectiveness. He said, “Here are the *real* results of the attack: The Sidi Bilal complex was severely damaged. The Azziziyah barracks received substantial damage. The Tripoli International Airport was hit hard, and five IL-76/CANDID heavy transport aircraft on the apron were destroyed. The Benghazi barracks were hit and a warehouse in the complex, involved MIG assembly, was destroyed. At Benina Airfield many planes were damaged or destroyed, including at least four MIGs; but most important, the Libyans were unable to launch planes from the airport during, or immediately after, the attack.”¹⁴⁵ A comprehensive review of the mission results is displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Operation El Dorado Canyon Results Summary
Source: Chart and weapons explanations from Bolger, 423

Target	Planned Planes Over Target	Planned Bombing*	Actual Planes Over Target	Actual Bombing
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¹³⁶ Boyne, 59.

¹³⁷ Boyne, 59.

¹³⁸ Bolger, 429.

¹³⁹ *ibid*, 421.

¹⁴⁰ Davis, 135.

¹⁴¹ *ibid*.

¹⁴² Bolger, 421.

¹⁴³ *ibid*, 422.

¹⁴⁴ William R. Doerner, “In the Dead of the Night,” *Time Magazine*, 28 April 1986.

¹⁴⁵ Weinberger, 198.

Azizyah Barracks	9 F-111 4 x 2,000 lb. each	36 Mk 84 2,000-lb. LBGs	3 F-111F bombed 1 F-111F missed 4 Aborts; 1 lost	13 hits 3 misses
Murat Sidi Bilal Camp	3 F-111F 4 x 2,000 lb. each	12 Mk 84 2,000-lb. LBGs	3 F-111F bombed	12 hits
Tripoli Airfield	6 F-111F 12 x 500 lb. each	72 Mk 82 500-lb. RDB	5 F-111F bombed 1 F-111F abort	60 hits
Jamahiriyah [Benghazi] Barracks	7 A-6E 12 x 500 lb. Each	84 Mk 82 500-lb. RDBs	6 A-6E bombed 1 aborted on deck	70 hits 2 misses
Benina Airfield	8 A-6E 12 x 500 lb. Each	72 Mk 20 500-lb. CBUs; 24 Mk 82 500-lb.	6 A-6E bombed 2 aborts	60 Mk 20 hits; 12 Mk 82 hits
Tripoli Air Defense Network	6 A-7E 4 x Shrike/HARM each	8 Shrikes 16 HARMS	6 A-7E fired	8 Shrikes 16 HARMS
Benghazi Air Defense Network	6 F/A-18 4 x Shrike/HARM each	4 Shrikes 20 HARMS	6 F/A-18 fired	4 Shrikes 20 HARMS
Totals	45 aircraft	300 bombs 48 homing missiles	35 bombed 1 missed 1 lost 8 aborts	227 hits 5 misses 48 homing missiles

*LGB, Paveway family laser-guided bomb; RDB, Snakeye retarded delivery (high drag) bomb; CBU, Rockeye cluster bomb unit-a container with hundreds of submunitions; Shrike, older, shorter range (about 10 miles) antiradiation missile; HARM, newer, longer range (about 30 miles) antiradiation missile.

Were the Objectives Achieved?

From the Reagan administration perspective, the raid was a success. Says Weinberger, “[T]he surest way to measure the success of an enterprise is to ask whether it achieved its objectives. Our objective here was to end Qaddafi’s belief that he could use terrorism without cost. That was accomplished Thus, our goals were realized, and one source of the export of terrorism was stopped at least temporarily.”¹⁴⁶ President Reagan said, “I have to say that he quieted down after the attack. I guess he’s sane enough to understand that we would retaliate anytime we had proof linking him to terrorist acts.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Weinberger, 197, 199.

¹⁴⁷ Reagan, 286.

Oliver North, who wrote the National Security Directive for the attack, said, “In point of fact, it worked; there was a serious diminution of terrorism in its immediate aftermath.”¹⁴⁸

Across the Atlantic, the only European leader to support the attacks, Margaret Thatcher said, “The raid was undoubtedly a success [Further] the Libyan raid was also a turning point [I]t turned out to be a more decisive blow against Libyan sponsored terrorism than I could ever have imagined. We are all too inclined to forget that tyrants rule by force and fear and are kept in check the same way.”¹⁴⁹

While terrorism did not disappear altogether immediately, American intelligence noted a decrease in Libyan message traffic and agents normally associated with terrorism operations which was seen as a result of the raid.¹⁵⁰ Statistically, it appears that El Dorado Canyon did have an impact on international terrorism. “International terrorist incidents in Western Europe dropped by 28 percent, and Middle Eastern terrorism in Europe dropped almost by half in 1986, from seventy-four to thirty-nine incidents, the decline being accounted for by the portion of the year after the attack on Libya; the lowered level continued for both categories in 1987. To the great relief of the Americans, bloody anti-American episodes became less common: international terrorist incidents directed at U.S. targets declined by over 25 percent from 1986 to 1987, and terrorism fatalities for Americans dropped from thirty-eight in 1985 to twelve in 1986 to seven in 1987.”¹⁵¹

The secondary objective of shocking the Europeans out of their inactivity against terrorism appears to have also been achieved. West German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl said, “Too frequently, the Europeans have been too satisfied with mere declarations which have been politically ineffective while leaving the U.S. alone in its struggle against international terrorism If we Europeans do not want to follow the Americans for reasons of our own, we must develop political initiatives.”¹⁵² European actions suggest that they developed a tougher stance on terrorism. It has been widely acknowledged that European governments took a stronger stance on terrorism following the attack. Proof of this came in the expulsion from Europe of several Libyan diplomats who were seen as real “bad apples.”¹⁵³ Soviet actions, discussed in the next section, support this.

Lessons Learned

Operation El Dorado Canyon demonstrated what American airpower was capable of achieving. American aircraft were now capable of flying tremendous distances (in fact, the F-111 flew the longest duration fighter sorties flown up to that time), penetrating sophisticated air defense systems, and under tight

¹⁴⁸ Deborah Hart Strober and Gerald S. Strober, *Reagan: The Man and His Presidency* (New York, NY.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 382.

¹⁴⁹ Thatcher, 447-448.

¹⁵⁰ Davis, 162.

¹⁵¹ *ibid*, 166.

¹⁵² Church, 26.

¹⁵³ Davis, 166.

ROE deliver precision munitions against specific targets.¹⁵⁴ As General Rogers wanted to demonstrate, American airpower was not just a threat when a US Navy aircraft carrier was in the vicinity.¹⁵⁵ This capability, much of which was due to the military build-up during the Reagan era, underpinned President Reagan's newly found leveraged position in dealing with allies and foes alike.¹⁵⁶ As Secretary Weinberger said, "So our allies and our potential enemies now had a far more accurate realization that neither threats nor terrorism could succeed against a newly strengthened America. Our people and our allies took comfort from that proof..."¹⁵⁷

The significance of aircrew training on performance was highlighted as well.¹⁵⁸ The Navy's new training approach paid big dividends.

"The positive outcome over Tripoli and Benghazi related directly to the disappointing, mixed-up daylight attacks against Syrian gunners in Lebanon back in 1983. The recriminations after that miscarried mission led to the establishment of the Naval Strike Warfare Center at Lemoore Naval Air Station (NAS), California, in May 1984. The center moved to the wide-open spaces of Fallon NAS, Nevada, in 1985. Navy fliers trained in a full free play environment, and the curriculum allowed for intensive practice raids under strict political rules of engagement. High tempos of operation, small concealed targets and opposing forces complicated the environment. When the navy flew over Libya in the spring of 1986, they knew their business. Given that the Sixth Fleet planned the mission, the new Fallon mentality...permeated the operation."¹⁵⁹

A third lesson that El Dorado Canyon brings forth is the value of precision-guided munitions. Of the sixty tons of weapons employed in just over ten minutes, the strikers employed only precision-guided munitions.¹⁶⁰ Without these, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to remain within President Reagan's guidelines that civilian casualties be kept to a minimum.¹⁶¹ Clearly, the inevitable misses caused by "dumb bombs" in Tripoli and Benghazi would have caused a tremendous international backlash. However, even with the most sophisticated tactical bombers of the day, the bombing results were not flawless. In post strike analysis, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Robert B. Sims, admitted that two percent of the bombs dropped missed their targets and landed in civilian populated areas.¹⁶² Perhaps one lesson is that no matter how tight the ROE, how good the aircrew, aircraft and weapons employed are, it is very difficult to remove Clausewitz's infamous "fog and friction of war" that often lead to unintended consequences. As Caspar Weinberger admitted, "Our Libyan plans were carefully

¹⁵⁴ Boyne, 62.

¹⁵⁵ See Davis, 121.

¹⁵⁶ Weinberger, 200.

¹⁵⁷ Weinberger, 201.

¹⁵⁸ Lt Col William P. Stroud III noted, in 1987, "That the raid on Libya showed how effective improved weaponry, well-trained crews, and superb tactics could be." See Lt Col William P. Stroud III, "Use and Misuse of Conventional Tactical Air Power," *Air Power Journal*, Summer 1987, 19.

¹⁵⁹ Bolger, 428-29.

¹⁶⁰ "Operation El Dorado Canyon," FAS Military Analysis Network, n.p., on-line, Internet, 29 Oct 2002, available from http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/el_dorado_canyon.htm.

¹⁶¹ Davis, 119. Further, Daniel P. Bolger says, "In any event, without Pave Tack, TRAM, and guided weapons, the entire operation would have been impossible." See Bolger, 430.

¹⁶² Bolger, 431.

drawn to do everything we could to prevent any collateral damage. We knew, however, that almost inevitably a bomb or two would go astray.”¹⁶³

A look at how the attacks were perceived – domestically and abroad - merits attention. Domestically, it appeared that Americans were pleased to be going after terrorists, their supporters and their assets.¹⁶⁴ A poll conducted for *Time* a week after the raid showed that “[a]n overwhelming 71% of 1,007 adults polled...approved the strike, vs. only 20% who disapproved and 9% who were not sure. Some 60% went further to agree with the statement that the raids “made me feel proud to be an American.”¹⁶⁵ However, this poll also showed that many Americans maintained a realistic outlook for the future. “Many respondents approved the strike despite a sober appreciation of the dangers involved. Three out of five declared themselves to be ‘afraid of what will happen in the future,’ and 48% agreed that ‘the bombing will only make the situation with Libya worse, not better. But the majority looked for eventual gains; 56% agreed that ‘in the long run, the bombing will help stop terrorist attacks against Americans.’”¹⁶⁶

Caspar Weinberger addressed the impact that El Dorado Canyon had on the Europeans. He said, “The allied reaction was predictable. People in opposition parties in England, Germany, the Netherlands, and some in Italy, protested most violently, sensing some political gain from their attacks on our raid. But after a short time, it appeared that a very great number of people, including many governments, were delighted that someone was able to teach Qaddafi a lesson”¹⁶⁷ However, not all Europeans appear to have been against the attacks. Polling showed that the French (ironically) and Swiss supported the attacks.¹⁶⁸ The Greeks, who saw the terrorism as an attack on their tourism industry, also supported the attack.¹⁶⁹

In England, Margaret Thatcher said, “The initial impact on public opinion in Britain, as elsewhere, was even worse than I had feared [one survey showed that after the attacks, 66% of those polled in Britain felt Reagan should not have ordered the bombing of Libya]. Public sympathy for Libyan civilians was mixed with fear of terrorist retaliation by Libya.”¹⁷⁰ Even with this, Thatcher appears to have been pleased with her decision to allow American operations from British basis. She noted that,

[T]here was a wave of gratitude from the United States for what we had done which is still serving this country well. The *Wall Street Journal* flatteringly described me as ‘magnificent’. Senators wrote to thank me. In marked contrast to feelings in Britain, our Washington embassy’s switchboard was jammed with congratulatory telephone calls. It was made quite clear by the Administration that Britain’s voice would be accorded special weight in Arms control negotiations. The extradition treaty, which we regarded as vital to bringing IRA terrorists back from America, was to receive stronger Administration support against filibustering opposition. The Fact that so few had struck by America in her time of trial strengthened the ‘special relationship,’ which will always

¹⁶³ Weinberger, 196.

¹⁶⁴ Strobers, 381.

¹⁶⁵ Church, 23.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Weinberger, 199.

¹⁶⁸ Davis, 146.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Thatcher, 447. British survey numbers come from Church, 26.

be special because of the cultural and historical links between our two countries, but which had a particular closeness for as long as President Reagan was in the White House.

“[Another] benefit, oddly enough was domestic, though it was by no means immediate. However unpopular, no one could doubt that our action had been strong and decisive. I had set my course and stuck to it. Ministers and disaffected MPs might mutter; but they were muttering now about leadership they did not like, rather than a failure of leadership. I had faced down the anti-Americanism which threatened to poison our relations with our closest and most powerful ally, and not only survived but emerged with greater authority and influence on the world stage: this the critics could not ignore.”¹⁷¹

Another interesting result of Operation El Dorado Canyon was the change in relationship between Libya and their super-power sponsor, the Soviet Union. “Unquestionably, the U.S. attack had a souring effect on the Soviet-Libyan relations. It was an embarrassment to the Soviets in the Arab world, and Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson reported that in his talks with Gorbachev, the Soviet leader expressed ‘general displeasure’ with Qaddafi.”¹⁷² Further, a Gorbachev statement in *Tass* was seen as a warning for Qadhafi to back off his stance against America and stop supporting terrorism.¹⁷³ More significantly, though, these words were backed up by Soviet deeds. A few months after the bombing, American intelligence became aware that a high-level Libyan diplomat responsible for planning terrorism attacks had recently arrived in East Berlin.¹⁷⁴ Once notified of this, the Soviets and East Germans had him sent home.¹⁷⁵

Finally, several fears were “debunked” concerning fears over Arab reactions. First, the fear that Qadhafi would be turned into a popular hero in the Arab world never materialized.¹⁷⁶ During its April conference, OPEC put forward a generic condemnation of the attack but promptly ignored Qadhafi’s exhortations for further action. In fact, verbal support was all Qadhafi received from much of the third world – many of these nation’s felt that Qadhafi had been dealt what he deserved.¹⁷⁷ Another fear was that Muslim nations would distance themselves from America.¹⁷⁸ While there were statements issued against the attacks, in private, back-channel communications from Arab nations quietly supported America’s actions. One Arab minister said, “Gaddafi has done more harm to us [by sponsoring terror] than to the Americans. The only problem with the attack on Libya, is that you didn’t get him.”¹⁷⁹ Finally, the fear of popular uprisings and mob-attacks on Americans overseas also did not materialize.¹⁸⁰ In a region known for such reactions, these did not occur.¹⁸¹ The only significant anti-American demonstrations occurred in

¹⁷¹ Thatcher, 447, 449.

¹⁷² Davis, 147.

¹⁷³ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Davis, 162-163.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.* 151.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Church, 26.

¹⁸⁰ Davis, 148.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*

Sudan and Tunisia.¹⁸² Overall, the Arab response indicated that they understood America's need to respond.¹⁸³ Thus, the majority of the reasons for inaction noted by the European leaders (save Thatcher) never materialized.

Secretary of Defense Weinberger aptly summarized Operation EL DORADO CANYON, "So at least twice, Qaddafi had tried by overt attacks, intimidation, threats and bluster, to assert control over international waters. He failed each time. When he saw that he could not accomplish his aim overtly, he then tried the covert use of terrorism. Here our response to him was so immediate and so devastating that for over a year he took no action of any kind."¹⁸⁴ Perhaps the final lesson to be learned from Operation EL DORADO CANYON is that states that sponsor terrorism have vulnerabilities that can be exploited. States, such as Libya, can be coerced or punished by striking assets they value. In this case, Libyan command centers, compounds, and high-priced aircraft were destroyed. Beyond the monetary value lost, Qaddafi lost a great deal of credibility. For a dictator, credibility is undoubtedly quite important.

¹⁸² *ibid.*

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, 149.

¹⁸⁴ Weinberger, 200.

Chapter 3

OPERATION INFINITE REACH: THE 1998 US EMBASSY BOMBING RESPONSE¹⁸⁵

Introduction

Muslims burn with anger at America. For its own good, America should leave [Saudi Arabia.]...There is no more important duty than pushing the American enemy out of the holy land...Due to the imbalance of power between our armed forces and the enemy forces, a suitable means of fighting the enemy must be adopted, i.e. using fast-moving, light forces that work under complete secrecy. In other words, to initiate a guerilla war, where sons of the nation, and not military forces, take part in it.

Usama bin Ladin¹⁸⁶

Declaration of War Against America
23 August 1996

We—with God's help—call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it...The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilian and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it...

Usama bin Ladin

Call to Murder American Civilians
22 February 1998

¹⁸⁵ Note to the reader. As mentioned in the first chapter of this study, the U.S. Navy using sea-launched cruise missiles superbly executed Operation Infinite Reach. The author salutes the men and women of the surface Navy and their accomplishments. However, cruise missiles could have been launched from aircraft for this strike or for similar strikes in the future. Further, the author feels that cruise missiles that are able to navigate to targets hundreds of miles away, regardless of their launching platforms, in fact, constitute a form of airpower.

¹⁸⁶ Note to the reader. There are many ways to spell Usama bin Ladin. This author uses the spelling version used by President Clinton as well as the Department of State. See, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1998* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2000), 1460 and Coordinator for Counterterrorism, United States Department of State, *Fact Sheet: Usama bin Ladin* (Washington, D.C., August 21, 1998), on-line, Internet, 7 Nov 2002, available from http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/fs_bin_ladin.html.

Background

Following the 1998 terrorist bombings of the U.S. embassies in East Africa, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said, "I think it is important for the American people to understand that we are in a long-term struggle. This [the war against terrorism] is, unfortunately, the war of the future."¹⁸⁷ The American military response to the embassy bombings was described at the time by James Bennet, of the New York Times, as the "most formidable American military assault ever against a private sponsor of terrorism."¹⁸⁸

One of the principal reasons the United States and the world finds itself in such a war is Usama bin Ladin and his terrorism organization, al Qaeda (Arabic for "the Base").¹⁸⁹ Bin Ladin, one of 52 children, is the son of a wealthy architect and construction magnate who earned his fortune building for King Fahd.¹⁹⁰ In his early twenties, Usama bin Ladin left Saudi Arabia for Afghanistan to join the guerrilla fighters, or mujahadeen, fighting the Soviet invaders.¹⁹¹ During the war, bin Ladin organized and ran an organization known as the Services Office, which recruited fighters from over fifty countries for the Afghan resistance.¹⁹² Using his personal fortune of an estimated \$250 million, bin Ladin was instrumental in bringing in and supporting these mujahadeen which eventually numbered as many as 20,000.¹⁹³ According to the *New York Times*, "Bin Laden spent millions supporting the Afghan guerrillas, financing thousands of volunteer foreign soldiers who came to Afghanistan from throughout the Islamic world, and creating a network of guest houses and charities to support them and their families."¹⁹⁴ Following the withdrawal of the Soviets in 1989 from Afghanistan, bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia and quickly traded his hatred of the Soviets for the same

¹⁸⁷ "Our Target Was Terror," *Newsweek*, 31 August 1998, 29.

¹⁸⁸ James Bennet, "U.S. Cruise Missiles Strike Sudan and Afghan Targets Tied to Terrorist Network," *New York Times*, 21 August 1998, 1.

¹⁸⁹ "Bin Laden, Millionaire with a Dangerous Grudge," *CNN.com/U.S.*, 27 September 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 12 November 2002, available from <http://www.cnn.com/2001/US/09/12/binladen.profile/index.html>.

¹⁹⁰ Bruce B. Auster, "Recruiter for Hate," *U.S. News and World Report*, 31 August 1998, 49.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.* Also, Frank Smyth, "Culture Clash: Bin Laden, Khartoum and the War Against the West," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, October 1998, 24.

¹⁹² *ibid.*

¹⁹³ *ibid.* Freedom fighter numbers from Smyth, 24.

¹⁹⁴ Tim Weiner, "U.S. Sees Bin Laden as Ringleader of Terrorist Network," *New York Times*, 21 August 1998, 1.

feelings towards moderate Arabic governments.¹⁹⁵ The arrival of American forces on Saudi soil during Gulf War was viewed by bin Laden as a desecration of the Muslim Holy Lands, and from that point forward he dedicated himself, according to a “U.S. intelligence official,” to create “a multinational organization for jihad, to purge the world of Western corrupters and their Arab friends.”¹⁹⁶ Most would see this as a daunting task. However, Bin Laden claims that from the war in Afghanistan, to him, “The biggest benefit was the myth of the superpower was destroyed.”¹⁹⁷

Recruiting former mujahadeen to join his cause was aided by the contacts he



Figure 2. Afghanistan

Source: Map of Afghanistan used by permission of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, on-line, Internet, 18 Mar 2002, available from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia02/afghanistan_sm02.gif.

developed while performing his duties in Afghanistan. By 1998, bin Laden was able to amass a following of roughly 3,000 followers.¹⁹⁸ Even more important, these followers

¹⁹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁹⁶ *ibid*.

¹⁹⁷ Smyth, 24.

¹⁹⁸ Auster, 48.

were already geographically dispersed when they returned home to Africa, Asia and the Middle East following their combat experiences in Afghanistan.¹⁹⁹

According to the US State Department, “The bin Ladin network [in 1998] is multi-national and has established a worldwide presence. Senior figures in the network are also senior leaders in other Islamic terrorist networks Bin Ladin and his network seek to provoke a war between Islam and the West and the overthrow of existing Muslim governments, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia.”²⁰⁰

Prior to the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Africa, al Qaeda had already committed significant acts of violence. From what is now known, one of bin Ladin’s first attempted strikes at the United States occurred in December 1992 when his terrorists attempted to bomb a hotel in Yemen where 100 American peacekeepers were billeted prior to entering Somalia.²⁰¹ The attack failed to kill American soldiers but did kill two Australian tourists.²⁰² Next, al Qaeda was linked to the February 1993 World Trade Center truck bombing.²⁰³ Later, in October 1993, al Qaeda was involved in the killing of 18 American servicemen in Mogadishu, Somalia.²⁰⁴ In 1995, al Qaeda detonated a car bomb in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, killing five Americans and two Indians.²⁰⁵ This same year also saw al Qaeda aid in the assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.²⁰⁶ The next year, in June of 1996, al Qaeda was implicated in the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 U.S. service members, and injured 264 others.²⁰⁷ In 1997 bin Ladin’s terror organization was involved in a bus bombing in Egypt that killed nine German tourists.²⁰⁸ Other attacks that did not materialize during this time

¹⁹⁹ “Former Mujeheddin: Bin Laden Network,” *U.S. News and World Report*, 31 Aug, 1998, 51.

²⁰⁰ *Fact Sheet: Usama bin Ladin*.

²⁰¹ Weiner, 1.

²⁰² *ibid.*

²⁰³ *ibid.* Also, Ryan C. Hendrickson, *The Clinton Wars* (Nashville, TN.: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002), 102.

²⁰⁴ “Bin Laden, Millionaire with a Dangerous Grudge.”

²⁰⁵ Hendrickson, 102. Also, Pamela Constable, “Bin Laden ‘Is Our Guest, So We Must Protect Him,’” *Washington Post*, 21 August 1998, 1.

²⁰⁶ “Our Target Was Terror,” 28. Also, Richard J. Newman, “America Fights Back,” *U.S. News and World Report*, 31 August 1998, 42.

²⁰⁷ Joyce Howard Price, “Albright, Cohen promise Retaliation,” *Washington Times*, 10 August 1998, 1. Also, “Massive Bomb Rocks U.S. Military Complex,” *CNN Interactive World News*, 26 June 1996, n.p., on-line, Internet, 9 January 2003, available from <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9606/25/saudi.explosion/index.html>.

²⁰⁸ Newman, 42.

period were a plot to assassinate Pope John Paul and to blow up six United States 747s over the Pacific.²⁰⁹

During this extended period of violence, a “turf war” in East Africa was developing between radical Islam and the West. According to Yossef Bodansky,

“Hassan Al-Turabi, the spiritual leader of Sudan and preeminent guide of militant Sunni Islam, has always been committed to the spread of Islam into sub-Saharan Africa. Since early 1992, Iran and Sudan have been engaged in a fierce campaign to consolidate their control over the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa. The clashes with and ultimate eviction of the U.S.-led U.N. forces from Somalia in 1993 constituted the first major round in the Islamist struggle for East Africa. Despite the dramatic outcome of the Islamist jihad in Somalia-effecting the U.S. withdrawal-Khartoum [Sudan] and Tehran were fully cognizant that they had not made tangible gains. After all, no Islamist government was established in Mogadishu in the aftermath of the Islamists’ triumph, and the fratricidal fighting between the various militias and other armed groups continued. The escalating civil war in southern Sudan served as a constant reminder of this. In addition, the foreign assistance reaching the blacks of southern Sudan via East African states added an incentive to strike out against these states and their strategic protector, the United States. Khartoum [Al-Turabi] was convinced, not without logic, that if it made assistance to the rebels in southern Sudan prohibitively ‘expensive’ to the neighboring states through terrorism, subversion, and destabilization, these governments would be reluctant to permit access to southern Sudan through their territories. Khartoum also thought that once the United States began to ‘suffer’-to be subjected to international terrorism-as a result of its support for Sudanese rebels, Washington would immediately cease its support and stop encouraging neighboring countries to assist the rebels.”²¹⁰

As alluded to above, several Islamic entities provided Al-Turabi, who headed Sudan’s National Islamic Front (NIF), with support.²¹¹ For example, Iran sent political specialists while Iraq sent military officers.²¹² Osama bin Ladin was introduced to the NIF by the Iranians and lived in Khartoum from 1991 to 1996.²¹³

During this period, the Clinton administration was actively engaged in the region as well. Admitting that it wanted to foster regime change the administration pledged \$20 million in non-military aid

²⁰⁹ For planned Pope John Paul assassination see Newman, 42 and Hendrickson 102. For American airliner plans see Newman, 42 and *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1998*, 1460.

²¹⁰ Yossef Bodansky, *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America* (Roseville, CA.: Prima Publishing, 1999, 2001), 232.

²¹¹ Smyth, 22.

²¹² *ibid*, 23.

²¹³ *ibid*, 23-24.

for the forces opposed to the NIF.²¹⁴ Further, the Clinton administration was able to apply enough pressure on Khartoum to expel bin Ladin in 1996.²¹⁵ However, this did not curtail his influence over the region.

In early 1998, bin Ladin and those involved with Islamic extremism in East Africa committed themselves to a string of operations designed to show the world their commitment to jihad and their wide span of operations.²¹⁶ Bin Ladin's alliance warned the



Figure 3. Sudan

Source: Map of Sudan used by permission of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, online, Internet, 18 Mar 2002, available from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia02/sudan_sm02.gif.

world that, "They would soon deliver a message to Americans 'which we hope they read with care, because we will write it, with God's help, in a language they will understand.'"²¹⁷

To these ends, terrorism cells were placed in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.²¹⁸ A thousand pounds of explosives were delivered to safe houses in each of the African capitals where they were assembled by these cells into bombs.²¹⁹ With guidance to conduct the bombings, the two terrorist groups approached the embassy buildings in their bomb-laden vehicles on the morning of 7 August 1998.²²⁰

²¹⁴ *ibid*, 23.

²¹⁵ *Fact Sheet: Usama bin Ladin*.

²¹⁶ Bodansky, 248.

²¹⁷ Weiner, 1.

²¹⁸ Bodansky, 258.

²¹⁹ *ibid*.

²²⁰ *ibid*, 260.

In Nairobi, an unarmed embassy guard had a brush with the terrorists as they tried to unsuccessfully enter the embassy compound.²²¹ As he fled for his life, the terrorists detonated their bomb. The ensuing blast killed 247 people and wounded another 5,000.²²² Among the dead were 12 Americans.²²³ At about the same time, the bomb in Tanzania was detonated and also exploded outside the embassy gate. While killing no Americans, this blast killed eleven Africans and injured seventy-two.²²⁴ Islamic extremist soon touted their achievements, according to the State Department, “[O]n August 19, an Islamic front created by the bin Ladin network . . . praised the bombings of our embassies and warned that, ‘America will face a black fate . . . strikes will continue from everywhere, and Islamic groups will appear one after another to fight American interest.’”²²⁵

Prior to the embassy bombings, the Clinton administration had a non-violent, four pronged approach to dealing with terrorism. First, the United States would “make no concessions with terrorists.”²²⁶ Second, the United States would seek to bring justice to those that were involved in terrorism.²²⁷ Third, the government would “isolate” and “change the behavior of terrorist.”²²⁸ Finally, the United States would work with other nations to create a global anti-terrorism environment.²²⁹ Following the embassy bombings, it appeared that this policy, divorced from the use of military force was inadequate. Madeleine Albright said, “I’ve just returned from both sites, and they are chilling - the tragic human face of indiscriminate terrorist murder. We cannot allow such cowardly and destructive acts to go unpunished [I]naction would be an invitation to further horror.”²³⁰

President Clinton had previously been given wide latitude by Congress to deal with terrorism. Following the Oklahoma City bombings, Congress empowered him to “use all necessary means, including covert action and military force, to disrupt, dismantle, and destroy international infrastructure used by international terrorists including overseas terrorist training facilities and safe havens.”²³¹ Armed with the ability to act, the president needed the proof to act militarily against the perpetrator. He told his key advisors on 12 August that he didn’t need proof that would hold up in a court of law; however, the proof still had to be conclusive.

Evidence that bin Ladin was involved in the embassy bombings quickly surfaced. The same day of the bombing, Pakistani security officials stopped a Palestinian as he tried to enter the country with a fake

²²¹ Karl Vick, “Base! Base! Terrorism! Terrorism!” *Washington Post*, 13 August 1998, 1.

²²² Kamran Khan and Pamela Constable, “Bomb Suspect Details Anti-U.S. Terror Force,” *Washington Post*, 19 August 1998, 1.

²²³ Address to the Nation by the President from the Oval Office, 20 August 1998, n.p., on-line, Internet, 7 November 2002, available from http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/strike_clinton980820a.html.

²²⁴ Bodansky, 264.

²²⁵ *Fact Sheet: Usama bin Ladin*.

²²⁶ Hendrickson, 101.

²²⁷ *ibid.*

²²⁸ *ibid.*

²²⁹ *ibid.*

²³⁰ Address by Madeleine Albright, United States Secretary of State, Delivered to the Press, Washington D.C., August 20, 1998. *Vital Speeches of the Day* vol. LXIV, No. 23. (New York, NY.: The City News Publishing Co.), 707.

²³¹ Andrea Stone, “War in the Shadows: How U.S. Will Fight Terrorism,” *USA Today*, 24 August 1998, 1.

passport.²³² The man, Muhammad Sadiq Howaida, later claimed that he worked for bin Ladin and that, “I did it [played a role in the Kenyan attack] all for the cause of Islam. He [bin Ladin] is my leader and I obey his orders.”²³³ Roughly five days later an intercepted cell-phone call linked two of bin Ladin’s associates to the attacks.²³⁴ Worse yet, intelligence indicated that further attacks were pending. Sandy Berger said, “[W]e began to receive quite a substantial volume of credible and reliable information that there were other attacks planned against U.S. targets around the world.”²³⁵ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hugh Shelton indicated “we had very reliable and convincing information that [the embassy attacks] might be only the first of two or three or even possible, four attacks.”²³⁶

Another concern for the administration was the potential for al Qaeda to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction. General Shelton indicated that they were “actively seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons for use against U.S. citizens and our interests around the world.”²³⁷ The attacks on the embassies clearly made this a sobering possibility.

President Clinton had the evidence he required and the knowledge of possible future attacks. With this, he made his decision to strike back on 14 August.²³⁸ In his own words, Clinton said, “From the moment we learned of the bombings, our mission was clear: Identify those responsible; bring them to justice; protect our citizens from future attacks.”²³⁹ Immediately following the attacks, the president explained his rationale behind the approval to strike back. He said, “I ordered this action for four reasons: First, because we had convincing evidence these groups played the key role in the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Second, because these groups have executed terrorist attacks against Americans in the past. Third, because we have compelling information that they were planning additional terrorist attacks against our citizens and others with the inevitable collateral casualties we saw so tragically in Africa. And, fourth, because they are seeking to acquire chemical weapons and other dangerous weapons.”²⁴⁰

²³² “Our Target Was Terror,” 26.

²³³ *ibid.*

²³⁴ *ibid.*, 27.

²³⁵ Address by Sandy Berger, National Security Advisor to the President, Delivered to the Press, Washington D.C., August 20, 1998. *Vital Speeches of the Day* vol. LXIV, No. 23. (New York, NY.: The City News Publishing Co.), 708.

²³⁶ Steven Lee Myers, “U.S. Offers More Details on Attack in the Sudan,” *New York Times*, 24 August 1998, 1.

²³⁷ Bennet, 1.

²³⁸ “Our Target Was Terror,” 28.

²³⁹ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1998*, 1464.

²⁴⁰ Address to the Nation by the President from Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, 20 August 1998, n.p., on-line, Internet, 7 November 2002, available from http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/strike_clinton980820.html.

The Selection of Airpower

Following the 7 August bombings, President Clinton ordered preliminary planning for a military response.²⁴¹ At the next meeting with his planners, on 12 August, Gen Shelton ran through the list of options.²⁴² Here, General Shelton told the president that he had considered attacks by ground forces and conventional aircraft but had ruled both out due to the risk they placed upon the American combatants.²⁴³ For the same reasons, the president agreed.²⁴⁴ With this, both agreed that cruise missiles could strike the enemy while minimizing U.S. risk.²⁴⁵

The Objectives

Minutes after the completion of the attacks, the president told the Nation, “Our objective was to damage their capacity to strike at Americans and other innocent people.”²⁴⁶ During his address to the Nation that night, President Clinton again spoke about the strike’s objectives. He said, “I want to speak to you about the objective of this action and why it was necessary. Our target was terror; our mission was clear: to strike at the network of radical groups affiliated with and funded by Usama bin Ladin, perhaps the preeminent organizer and financier of international terrorism in the world today. . . . With compelling evidence that the bin Ladin network of terrorist groups was planning to mount further attacks against Americans and other freedom-loving people, I decided America must act.”²⁴⁷ Secretary of Defense William Cohen said the raids were intended to “reduce the ability of these terrorists organizations to train and equip their misguided followers or to acquire weapons of mass destruction for their use in campaigns of terror.”²⁴⁸

How Airpower Was Employed

Planning for the strikes, later known as Operation Infinite Reach, was conducted by a very small group of top officials that operated under the code-name of, “Small Group.”²⁴⁹ Members included President Clinton, Secretary of Defense Cohen, Secretary of State Albright, the National Security Advisor

²⁴¹ “Our Target Was Terror,” 28.

²⁴² *ibid.*

²⁴³ *ibid.*

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *ibid.* Yossef Bodansky claims that bin Ladin was warned before the attacks by Pakistani authorities “the United States is not willing to risk sending commandos to the region and because Pakistan would not allow the United States to use its territory as a springboard.” See Bodansky, 288.

²⁴⁶ Address to the Nation by the President from Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, 20 August 1998.

²⁴⁷ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1998*, 1460-61.

²⁴⁸ Steven Lee Myers, “Attacks Aimed 70 Missiles at Targets 2,500 miles Apart,” *New York Times*, 21 August 1998, 1.

²⁴⁹ “Our Target Was Terror,” 24.

Berger, and Gen. Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staffs.²⁵⁰ Gen. Zinni, the commander of United States forces in the region, drew up the plans.”²⁵¹ Apparently, secrecy was the key factor in keeping those involved to an absolute minimum.²⁵²

Two target areas were selected.²⁵³ First, in Afghanistan, was the Khost terrorist training camp located roughly 100 miles south of Kabul.²⁵⁴ Secretary Cohen described the site by saying, “[T]he bin Laden network of terror is intimately connected with the Khost training facility in Afghanistan against which we conducted operations. Sometimes referred to as ‘Terrorist University,’ this is the largest Sunni terrorist training facility in the world. At these facilities, terrorist from around the world receive paramilitary training that ranges from target practice to improvising explosive devices to training on tanks and other armored vehicles. In recent months, there has been an expansion of these facilities, including construction of new buildings, which indicates that an increase in training activity was planned. These facts helped shape our decision to strike at these facilities.”²⁵⁵ According to General Shelton, about 600 personnel normally inhabited the camp.²⁵⁶ Finally, according to Secretary Cohen and General Shelton, “convincing evidence” existed indicating that the embassy bombers trained at this facility.²⁵⁷ Another reason provided justification to strike the Khost camp. Intelligence indicated that, according to the president, “[A] gathering of key terrorist leaders . . .” or “terrorist convention” was to have occurred on the day of the attack.²⁵⁸ The attempted mechanism for change employed against the Khost camps appeared to be a limited combination of a denial and decapitation strategy. The attempt to level the camp’s facilities, assets, and personnel was a form of a denial strategy. Trying to kill top al Qaeda operatives was the decapitation portion of the attack.

The other target selected was the El Shifa Pharmaceutical plant in Sudan that President Clinton announced was “involved in the production of materials for chemical weapons.”²⁵⁹ According to the *New York Times*, administration and intelligence officials “believed that senior Iraqi scientists were helping to produce elements of the nerve agent VX” at the factory.²⁶⁰ Apparently, support for this claim was obtained by a single soil sample secretly taken next to the El Shifa plant that supposedly revealed a rare chemical

²⁵⁰ Tim Weiner and Steven Lee Myers, “Flaws in U.S. Account Raise Questions on Strike in Sudan,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1998, 1.

²⁵¹ *ibid.*

²⁵² *ibid.*

²⁵³ Richard J. Newman claims that the two targets selected “had been in the Pentagon’s inventory of targets for several years. That made it relatively easy for military planners to organize their strikes.” See Newman, 42.

²⁵⁴ Bennet, 1.

²⁵⁵ William S. Cohen, “About Last Week . . . The Policy: We are ready to Act Again,” *Washington Post*, 23 August 1998, C1.

²⁵⁶ Myers, 1.

²⁵⁷ Rowan Scarborough, “Military’s Use of Guided Missiles Kept U.S. Pilots Out of the Line of Fire,” *Washington Times*, 21 August 1998, 13.

²⁵⁸ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1998*, 1461. “Terrorist convention,” see Newman, 42.

²⁵⁹ *ibid.* Also, Newman, 40.

²⁶⁰ “U.S. Says Iraq Aided Production of Chemical Weapons in Sudan,” *New York Times*, 25 August 1998.

necessary for the construction of VX.²⁶¹ This was also a denial strategy in that it attempted to prevent VX from being manufactured and employed by al Qaeda.

President Clinton gave the approval for the US Navy mission planners to begin preparing for the attacks. Part of this involved the complex process of mapping out the route of each missile to ensure that it would not conflict with another missile while in-flight.²⁶² Operation Infinite Reach called for approximately 70 Tomahawk missiles to strike the Khost terrorist camp while approximately 6 missiles struck the El Shifa plant.²⁶³ According to Secretary Cohen, “Our plan was to attack these sites with sufficient power to certainly disrupt them and hopefully destroy them Some of these are solid structures; others are less so, but we believe that given the targeting that was done with the capability that was unleashed, it would cause sufficient damage to disrupt them for some time.”²⁶⁴ Richard J. Newman of *U.S. News & World Report* claims “several of the Tomahawks targeted at the camps carried cluster munitions, designed to disperse shrapnel-like bomblets over a large area.”²⁶⁵ Cluster munitions are especially effective against personnel. Newman also quotes a government official as saying that in Afghanistan, “Collateral damage was just not an issue.”²⁶⁶ The attack on the El Shifa plant required special attention since it was thought to contain highly dangerous materials. According to Newman, “One final step was to run computer models of the risk that explosions at the chemical factory would unleash a plume of poison gas across Sudan. After assessing data on the suspected chemicals, climate, and prevailing winds, analysts decided the harmful effects would be minimal.”²⁶⁷ Secretary Cohen indicated that one of the reasons the attacks were conducted at night was to minimize civilian casualties.²⁶⁸

President Clinton gave the execute order at 0300 on 14 August.²⁶⁹ Later, four surface vessels and one submarine in the Arabian Sea launched their missiles through Pakistani airspace into the Khost facility in Afghanistan.²⁷⁰ Two surface vessels fired their missiles from the Red Sea into Sudan.²⁷¹ The Tomahawk missiles struck at exactly 1:30 P.M Washington time.²⁷²

Were the Objectives Achieved?

The president and his administration put forth three primary objectives for Operation Infinite Reach. The first was to damage al Qaeda’s ability to execute terrorist attacks by damaging the infrastructure at the Khost facility and, presumably, kill as many terrorists as possible. The New York

²⁶¹ *ibid.*

²⁶² Newman, 42.

²⁶³ *ibid.*, 38.

²⁶⁴ Myers, 1.

²⁶⁵ Newman, 42.

²⁶⁶ *ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *ibid.*

²⁶⁸ Myers, 1.

²⁶⁹ “Our Target Was Terror,” 24.

²⁷⁰ Newman, 40.

²⁷¹ *ibid.*

²⁷² Myers, 1.

Times quoted a “senior Pentagon official” as saying that the “cruise missiles that landed in Afghanistan heavily damaged or destroyed virtually every ‘soft’ target at the sprawling mountain training camp, including barracks, communications equipment and arms stockpiles.”²⁷³ Sandy Berger was quoted as saying that Infinite Reach caused “moderate to heavy damage at each of the targets” and Newsweek said that according to Berger, the “terror network’s operations had been significantly impaired.”²⁷⁴ The ruling Taliban government in Afghanistan claimed 21 people had been killed at the Khost facility, but these numbers were unsubstantiated.²⁷⁵ Unfortunately, no top terrorist leaders were killed and there is no corroborating evidence showing that there was a terrorist summit at the camp.²⁷⁶

Operation Infinite Reach’s second objective was to deny al Qaeda chemical weapons from the El Shifa plant. Karl Vick of the *Washington Post* reported that the plant was hit with “remarkable precision.”²⁷⁷ He says, “The factory’s walls fell inward while, not 10 feet outside them, 55-gallon drums remained standing. The roof came down, the assembly line was blown apart, and the candy factory that shares a wall with the plant was left intact.”²⁷⁸ Steven Lee Myers of the *New York Times* confirms this by saying, “[T]he factory was obliterated by the strike, which one U.S. official said was designed to make the building fall in on itself, limiting the chance of toxins escaping into the air.”²⁷⁹ Civilian casualties were reported to be ten wounded with one possible fatality.²⁸⁰ Quite a bit of controversy has occurred over whether or not this facility in fact was producing key elements for chemical weapons. The dispute continues today. However, once identified as a target, regardless of its purpose, it was summarily destroyed.²⁸¹

The final objective was to deter further planned attacks. According to Madeleine Albright, “It is very likely something would have happened had we not done this.”²⁸² According to American officials, “before the raids, attacks were imminent on U.S. embassies in Albania and Pakistan Threats were reported to other embassies in Malaysia, Yemen, Egypt and Uganda, among others”²⁸³ These embassies were not hit, and from a *limited* perspective, this final objective appears to have been met. However, this warrants continued discussion and will be addressed in more detail in the next section.

²⁷³ “U.S. Says Iraq Aided Production of Chemical Weapons in Sudan”

²⁷⁴ “Our Target Was Terror,” 24.

²⁷⁵ “Our Target Was Terror,” 28.

²⁷⁶ Yossef Bodansky claims, “U.S. intelligence had learned that a major terrorist conference was to take place in the area, and the strike was timed to hit the participants, including Osama bin Laden and his close lieutenants. They all survived; they and many other terrorists being trained in these facilities were simply not there when the cruise missiles hit. There is good reason to believe that high officials in Pakistan warned the terrorist elite about the impending U.S. Strike.” Further, for killed and wounded numbers, he claims twenty-six were killed and thirty-five were wounded. See Bodansky, 283-285.

²⁷⁷ Karl Vick, “U.S., Sudan Trade Claims on Factory,” *Washington Post*, 25 August 1998, 1.

²⁷⁸ *ibid.*

²⁷⁹ Myers, 1.

²⁸⁰ “Our Target Was Terror,” 28.

²⁸¹ For more information on this, see Sue Fleming, “Sudan Plant Owner Sues U.S.,” *ABCNews.Com*, n.p., on-line, Internet, 15 Jan 2002, available from <http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/sudan000727.html>.

²⁸² *ibid.*

²⁸³ *ibid.*

Lessons Learned

One lesson that is highlighted by Operation Infinite Reach is the versatility that cruise missiles give political leaders and military planners when attack high-threat targets. Cruise missiles were first introduced to combat during the initial phase of Operation Desert Storm.²⁸⁴ Since then, cruise missiles have been used two more times in Iraq and once against the Serbs in Bosnia.²⁸⁵

From the senior leaders perspective, cruise missiles are enticing because they offer a response without putting American lives at risk.²⁸⁶ From a planner's perspective, cruise missiles, in many respects, offer several benefits to manned aircraft. Diplomatically, cruise missiles fired from the surface or stateside-based aircraft do not require staging rights from foreign governments. William Matthews of the Air Force Times claims that the U.S. Air Force was denied permission to launch strikes against Iraq in the winter of 1997 by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and countries in the region.²⁸⁷ According to Lauren Thompson of the Lexington Institute, "It [obtaining permission from foreign governments to allow airstrikes from their bases] is the Achilles' heel of the Air Force's global-reach concept..."²⁸⁸ "I think any time we can carry out an objective with cruise missiles, that's the thing to do," said retired Maj. Gen. Charles Link, a former assistant deputy Air Force chief of staff for plans and operations."²⁸⁹

Further, the raid in Sudan showed that cruise missiles could be used to strike difficult targets while minimizing civilian casualties. Two prerequisites make this possible. First, cruise missiles are highly accurate. Michael D. Towle of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that the missiles used in Operation Infinite Reach were Block III Tomahawks, which have an accuracy of 30 feet due to GPS guidance.²⁹⁰ The second requirement limiting civilian casualties is solid intelligence. Knowing the area, civilian patterns, etc, is crucial.

However, one of the negative aspects of using cruise missiles is their cost. Essentially, every time the United States fires a cruise missile, it is firing a \$750,000 asset on a one-way trip.²⁹¹ According to Harry Levins of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "Thursday's raid ate up more than \$500 million in ordnance, most of it fired at a batch of backwoods barracks."²⁹²

²⁸⁴ Thomas E. Ricks, "Reliance on Cruise Missiles in Raid Signifies Weapon's Greater Stature," *Wall Street Journal*, 21 August 1998, 4.

²⁸⁵ *ibid.*

²⁸⁶ Michael D. Towle, "Washington is Turning to Tomahawk Missile," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 August 1998, 1.

²⁸⁷ William Matthews, "Why Strike was a Job for the Navy," *Air Force Times* 59, no. 4 (31 August 1998), 6. This is also supported by Harry Levins, "In the Beginning, the Pentagon Didn't Think Much of Cruise Missiles," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, B4.

²⁸⁸ *ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *ibid.*

²⁹⁰ Towle, 1.

²⁹¹ Levins, B4.

²⁹² *ibid.*

The high cost of Operation Infinite Reach shows the need for a fielded unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV) with more punch than a RQ-1 Predator with Hellfire missiles.²⁹³ In an article published in *Aerospace Power Journal*, Col Robert Chapman writes, “[W]ithout the risk of aircrew loss, vehicle attrition becomes less onerous from both a moral and political standpoint. One could task UCAVs for high-risk, high payoff missions without attendant risk to human life. As a result, UCAVs could expand the range of coercive options available to both civilian and military leaders.”²⁹⁴ From a simplistic standpoint, using UCAVs would be much more economical. A single Tomahawk missile (with a 1000 pound warhead), such as was launched during Infinite Reach costs \$600,000. A bomber-launched CALCM (with a 2000 pound warhead) costs \$1,160,000. A UCAV delivering a single GPS guided JDAM (with up to 2000 pound bombs) costs a fraction of the Tomahawk. The most expensive part of the JDAM is the guidance kit, which costs \$21,000. The bomb itself is already in weapons inventories.²⁹⁵ A comparable raid to Infinite Reach (which has been shown to cost in the neighborhood of \$500 million) using UCAVs and JDAMs would have cost roughly \$1.6 million. Obviously, the UCAV has associated costs, but it is *reusable*. Further, UCAVs can offer real-time acquisition of mobile or difficult to find targets via on-board sensors. This would allow for tremendous target area flexibility and persistence. As Colonel Chapman says, “UCAVs might also play an important role in low intensity conflict or contingency operations. Low observability, long endurance, and absence of pilot support are ideal attributes for long-duration missions in hostile or contested airspace. Proponents envision UCAVs conducting armed reconnaissance missions, patrolling the skies over hostile territory, and holding enemy targets at risk”²⁹⁶

Much like Operation El Dorado Canyon, Infinite Reach enjoyed strong domestic support. A Gallup poll taken a day after the cruise missile strikes (21 August 1998) showed that 66% of those polled approved of Operation Infinite Reach.²⁹⁷ Further, when asked about civilian casualties, 65% felt “[c]ivilian casualties are regrettable, but the U.S. was right to attack” (only 27% felt that a guarantee of no civilian casualties was a requirement prior to attacking).²⁹⁸ These numbers challenge the popular conception that the American public is overly casualty averse. Again, like the Libya raid, Americans supported the attacks but maintained a sober outlook. When asked what they felt the impact of the attacks would be, 47% responded that they felt they would “increase terrorist actions in the USA and abroad” (versus 38% who felt they would decrease terrorist activities).²⁹⁹ It appears that the strikes gathered more support over time. Gallup released another poll three days later (24 August 1998) showing that approval for the airstrikes had

²⁹³ Statement of Thomas J. Cassidy, Jr., President and CE, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. to the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Research and Development, February 20, 2002. n.p., on-line, Internet, 13 February 2003, available from <http://www.house.gov/hasc/openingstatementsandpressreleases/107thcongress/02-02-20pace.html>.

²⁹⁴ Robert E. Chapman, “Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles,” *Aerospace Power Journal*, Summer 2002, 61.

²⁹⁵ Weapons cost from Chapman, 61.

²⁹⁶ *ibid.*, 62.

²⁹⁷ Maria Puente, “Poll: 66% Approve of Decision.” *USA Today*, 21 August 1998, 6.

²⁹⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹⁹ *ibid.*

grown to 75% (versus 18% who disapproved).³⁰⁰ Further, this same poll showed that 76% of Americans would support “future U.S. attacks using cruise missiles (versus 19% who indicated they would disapprove).³⁰¹ This poll also showed that while they would have supported a response using ground forces, cruise missile attacks were preferred (65% said they would have approved ground attack while 30% said they would not have approved).³⁰²

Overseas, the reaction to the strikes was mixed. In Europe, Germany blandly supported Infinite Reach.³⁰³ Helmut Kohl said “resolute actions by all countries” are necessary to fight terrorism.³⁰⁴ In Moscow, Boris Yeltsin also blandly spoke against the strike by saying, “[My] reaction to this is negative, as it would be to any act of terrorism, military intervention, or the ineffective approach to resolving disputes without trying all forms of negotiation and diplomacy.”³⁰⁵ However, the Russian government quickly noted that the upcoming summit with President Clinton would not be affected.³⁰⁶ In China, the foreign minister “condemned all terrorism but criticized the United States obliquely, saying that the embassy bombings should have been dealt with through international law.”³⁰⁷ In predominantly Islamic areas, the response was primarily negative.³⁰⁸ Muslims felt this showed America’s willingness to violate sovereign airspace and kill civilians.³⁰⁹

The strike on the El Shifa plant generated considerable controversy and highlights the need for the US government to be prepared to receive criticism if they appear to not have their facts straight or are unwilling to reveal sensitive source information that was used in the target selection process. Soon after the attacks, the Clinton administration found itself defending the attack on the El Shifa. Tim Weiner and Steven Lee Myers of the *New York Times* reported that “some of the key statements made by Administration officials to justify the attack [had] proven to be inaccurate, misleading or open to question.”³¹⁰ Further, “Administration officials’ efforts to strengthen their case have been complicated by the extreme secrecy they imposed in launching the attack, which they now say prevents them from showing their evidence to the world. That secrecy and the inconsistencies in their public statements have given the Sudanese Government . . . a chance to challenge the justification for the attack and call for an international inquiry.”³¹¹ Inconsistencies include telling reporters soon after the attack that, “We have no evidence – or

³⁰⁰ “3 Out of 4 Back Future Airstrikes,” *USA Today*, 24 August 1998, 4.

³⁰¹ *ibid.*

³⁰² *ibid.*

³⁰³ Frank McCoy, “A World of Opinions About U.S. Strikes,” *U.S. News and World Report*, 31 August 1998, 52.

³⁰⁴ *ibid.*

³⁰⁵ *ibid.*

³⁰⁶ *ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *ibid.*

³⁰⁸ *ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *ibid.*

³¹⁰ Tim Weiner and Steven Lee Myers, “Flaws in U.S. Account Raise Questions on Strike in Sudan,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1998, 1.

³¹¹ *ibid.*

have seen no products, commercial products that are sold out of this facility.”³¹² Another intelligence official stated that “this is not a normal pharmaceutical facility.”³¹³ Reporting by *Time* challenged these statements and the overall case brought forward to strike the plant.³¹⁴ They said, “The White House had to dial back earlier claims that the plant produced only chemical-weapons precursors and that bin Laden had financed its operation. It turns out that the el-Shifa manufactured much of the anti-biotics, malaria and tuberculosis drugs sold in Sudan. And the CIA had evidence only that bin Laden had put money into Sudan’s military industry, not the plant specifically.”³¹⁵ While not endearing himself to the intelligence community, President Reagan, after El Dorado Canyon, shared to the world that we had been reading Libyan diplomatic message traffic (which clearly implicated them with the Berlin disco bombing). Obviously, he felt this was necessary to justify his actions – and it does appear that this was moderately effective.

Apparently, the Clinton administration chose not to follow this course of action. This lesson appears not to have been lost upon the next Secretary of State, Colin Powell. During his 5 February 2003 address to the United Nations Security Council, Powell made use of intercepted voice communications and satellite imagery to garner support for the administration’s hard-line policy on Saddam Hussein. While this paper does not advocate regularly compromising intelligence, if one does not sometimes release intelligence data, and especially if the facts are inaccurately or inconsistently presented, there are likely to be very negative effects for US policy. In any case, US credibility and competence are brought into question. Ironically, within hours of the embassy bombings, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said, “What we have to guard against here is to take action without having all the facts. While there might be instant gratification to do something about an attack on us, we have to be absolutely sure we have the facts straight.”³¹⁶

It was noted earlier that Infinite Reach did achieve its limited objectives. This is based upon personal testimony from administration officials at the time. However, as world events unfolded, it became apparent that the minimalist military objectives sought yielded minimal real-world effects. The significance of this cannot be overlooked. In reality, it was quite easy to launch cruise missiles into Afghanistan and Sudan, destroy a couple of fixed targets, and then announce success. Perhaps Infinite Reach did prevent a string of already planned terrorism attacks. What is apparent, however is that the Al Qaeda agenda of attacking US interests prior to the embassy bombings continued with the attack on the USS Cole in 2000 and the millennium plan to detonate a bomb in Los Angeles International Airport.³¹⁷ Finally, Al Qaeda shook the world once again on 11 September 2001.

With this, Infinite Reach showed that the military did, indeed, level the targets it intended to hit – but clearly, this strategy left far too much unfinished. Obviously, the war on terrorism did not end with

³¹² *ibid.*

³¹³ *ibid.*

³¹⁴ “A Pair of Quick Arrests,” *Time*, 7 September 1998, 45.

³¹⁵ *ibid.*

³¹⁶ Price, 1.

³¹⁷ “Bin Laden, Millionaire with a Dangerous Grudge.”

Infinite Reach. Furthermore, Infinite Reach failed to deliver a decisive, or even noteworthy, blow to al Qaeda. At the time of the retaliatory strikes, a former CIA counter-terrorism expert stated that Infinite Reach “did very little to hurt bin Laden and probably initiated a new round of violence.”³¹⁸ The message that President Clinton sought to send was, in his own words, “Let our actions today send this message loud and clear. There are no expendable American targets. There will be no sanctuary for terrorist.”³¹⁹ However, it appears the message received by bin Laden was quite different. In his words, the message he received was, “The American bombardment had only shown that the world is governed by the law of the jungle. That brutal, treacherous attack killed a number of civilian Muslims. As for material damage, it was minimal. By the grace of God, the missiles were ineffective. The raid proved that the American army is going downhill in its morale. Its members are too cowardly and too fearful to meet the young people of Islam face to face.”³²⁰ Following the 9-11 attacks, Michael O’Hanlon of the Brookings Institution noted that, “Throughout the 1990s, the United States has responded to acts of terrorism using only very limited means.”³²¹ Responding to the 9-11 attacks, O’Hanlon looked back at the cruise missile responses of Infinite Reach as well as against Saddam Hussein and said, “The key point is that we cannot use a limited dose of force just to send a message. That approach has been tried and failed. Generally, the only message sent is one of irresoluteness. And it leaves the bin Ladens of the world free to strike again.”³²² Bob Woodward shows that George W. Bush had feelings much akin to O’Hanlon. He writes,

“President Bush, like many members of his national security team, believed the Clinton administration’s response to Osama bin Laden and international terrorism, especially since the embassy bombings in 1998, had been so weak as to be provocative, a virtual invitation to hit the United States again. ‘The antiseptic notion of launching cruise a missile into some guy’s...tent, really is a joke,’ Bush said later in an interview. ‘I mean, people viewed that as the impotent America...a flaccid...kind of technology competent but not very tough country that was willing to launch a cruise missile out of a submarine and that’d be it. I do believe there is the image of America out there that we are so materialistic, that we’re almost hedonistic, that we don’t have values, and that when struck, we wouldn’t fight back. It was clear that bin Laden felt emboldened and didn’t feel threatened by the United States.’”³²³

In the grand scheme of things, Operation Infinite Reach destroyed very little of value – bin Laden and his chief lieutenants survived and Al Qaeda was able to continue their terrorists training in Afghanistan. Worse yet, bin Laden was able to attack America in September of 2000 in a manner that is still difficult to believe. While our response was weak and ineffective, bin Laden’s response was just the opposite. While Infinite Reach spoke of denial and decapitation, the *actual* response fell woefully short of the intentions behind these strategies. The death and damage inflicted by al Qaeda’s embassy bombings in

³¹⁸ “Our Target Was Terror,” 29.

³¹⁹ Bennet, 1.

³²⁰ “Exclusive Interview: Conversation with Terror,” *Time Asia*, 14 September 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 11 December 2002, available from <http://www.time.com/time/asia/news/interview/0,9754,174550,00.html>.

³²¹ Michael O’Hanlon, “Symbolic Missile Strikes Won’t Work; We Need Sterner Measures,” *The Officer*, October 2001, 26.

³²² *ibid.*

³²³ Bob Woodward, *Bush At War* (New York, NY.: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 38-39.

Africa warranted a much more robust and persistent American response. Arguably, our response was tempered by the fear of international reaction to a more robust response. In hindsight, we now know that the policy of “kicking the can down the road” via a show of force delayed the inevitable – a direct and continued war against al Qaeda. Unfortunately, thousands more had to be murdered to bring this reality to light.

The significance of the al Qaeda embassy bombings cannot be overlooked. Two of our embassies – facilities that represent diplomacy and international goodwill - had been attacked. Hundreds of Africans, many of them employees of our government, as well as a score of Americans had been murdered in a premeditated, well-coordinated, and sophisticated attack. It is now evident that this is a case that required a much more significant response. These attacks were clear foreshadowing of what lay ahead. Cruise missiles appear to be selected because they put no American lives at risk. If there ever was a case where it was worth putting lives at risk, this was the case. Either persistent and more encompassing air attacks were needed or a combined air and commando type operation would have sent the message that America will not tolerate this by saying, “We are willing to sacrifice lives to put an end to this.” The willingness *to take* casualties is a very loud statement and at times, necessary statement. Our response appears to have been more for the American audience than al Qaeda. To Americans, the message was that this will not stand – America will retaliate. But, this sells the American public short in terms of the willingness to accept casualties. This was not Vietnam. Further, our special operations forces have made quantum improvements since the botched Iranian hostage rescue attempt. The author feels that stronger action, and if necessary, the resultant casualties, would have been understood by the America public. Al Qaeda saw through this and read it for what it was – a one time, limited strike that smacked of casualty and direct engagement aversion. Our message, perhaps centered on domestic opinion, convinced al Qaeda that America was a “toothless tiger.”

Finally, Operation El Dorado Canyon was successful in deterring Qadhafi because he had valuable assets that could be and were targeted – a previously mentioned weakness of state sponsored terrorism. In bin Ladin’s case, his shadowy network offered virtually no high value targets that could hold him in check. This brings out a major difference between state sponsored terrorism and terrorism that is formed by a loose alliance which receives its funding and support from a myriad of sources. In a case such as the latter, persistent strikes appear to be a must, not to deter, but to implement a denial strategy that prevents the terrorists the freedom to operate at leisure and, if possible, a decapitation strategy to, at the minimum, induce Clausewitz’s fog and friction upon the terrorist senior leadership.

Chapter 4

ISRAEL, AIRPOWER AND THE SECOND PALESTINIAN INTIFADA

Introduction

You can't beat terrorism at the symposium at the university. The most effective way to deal with terror is the elimination or incarceration of the people who lead these organizations.

Deputy Defense Minister Ephraim Sneh
Radio Address in Israel
February 2001

By September of 2000, Israelis and Palestinians were sitting on a powder keg waiting for a spark to blast the region into hatred, violence and death. This spark came in the form of Ariel Sharon, a right-wing Israeli leader, and his visit to the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Temple Mount on 28 September 2000.³²⁴ This current round of violence has come to be known as the second-Intifada – Arabic for “a shaking off.”³²⁵ To look at how the Israelis have used airpower as part of a combined arms operation to fight this current war against terrorism; a study of recent clashes between the Israelis and Palestinians needs to be examined.

Background

While the focus of this chapter is about the second Intifada (September 2000 until the present), it is necessary to briefly look at the history of the Israeli-Palestinian problems from the 1960s onward. However, it is important to note that since the inception of the 1918 British Mandate, the Jews and the Palestinians have been at war with each other over the issues of statehood, borders, etc. To combat Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was created in 1964 from multiple groups of Palestinians that received financial support from throughout the Arab world.³²⁶ The Palestinians organized themselves as a government in exile and stated in their charter that their purpose was the “destruction of the Israeli state and

³²⁴ Anthony H. Cordesman, “Israel versus the Palestinians: The ‘Second Intifada’ and Asymmetric Warfare,” (working draft, Center for Strategic and International Studies), on-line, page 10, Internet, 1 February 2003, available from http://www.csis.org/burke/sa/israelvspale_intafada.pdf. Cordesman, 10.

³²⁵ Martin Van Crevald, *The Sword and the Olive* (New York, NY.: Public Affairs, 1998), 341.

³²⁶ James Corum and Wray Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars* (Lawrence, KS.: 2003), 398.

the establishment of a Palestinian state.”³²⁷ Following the Six-Day War in 1967 between Israel and its Arab neighbors, the animosity between the PLO and Israel was compounded by the Israeli conquest and occupation of the Gaza Strip, the entire city of Jerusalem, and the West Bank of the Jordan River.³²⁸ These areas contained hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. Seeking a safe haven from which to operate, the PLO staged out of Jordan until the mid-1970s when King Hussein saw their considerable military forces as a threat to Jordan’s stability and drove them out of his kingdom into neighboring Lebanon during a series of bloody military operations.³²⁹ Due to the political instabilities in Lebanon, the PLO found a safe haven there and effectively became a state within a state.³³⁰ By the early 1980s, they amassed a conventional military force of 15,000 regular troops.³³¹ From their bases in southern Lebanon, the PLO waged war against Israel utilizing terrorist attacks by small, well-trained teams.³³² Further, the PLO used artillery and rocket attacks against targets inside Israel.³³³ From May to July 1981, the PLO made 1,230 artillery and rocket attacks that hit 26 northern Israeli towns, killing six and wounding 26 civilians.³³⁴ The last straw for Israel was the assassination of the Israeli Ambassador to London, Shlomo Argov. The new Israeli Defense Minister, Ariel Sharon, blasted the government for being soft on the PLO and decided to invade Lebanon and engage the PLO directly.³³⁵

The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) invasion of Lebanon, Operation Peace For Galilee, commenced on 6 June 1982.³³⁶ The stated objective for the invasion was to crush the PLO infrastructure and drive the remainder of its forces at least twenty-five miles north of Israel – thereby putting them beyond rocket range of Israel.³³⁷ The invasion force consisted of six Israeli divisions - 70,000 men and 1,000 tanks along with the Israeli Air Force (IAF).³³⁸

Used in a combined arms manner, the IAF played a major role in Peace For Galilee. On the left flank, IAF helicopter gunships and fighter-bombers neutralized the only major PLO point of resistance – a stronghold at Beaufort Castle, remaining from the crusades.³³⁹ It took the left flank only four days to reach Beirut.³⁴⁰ On the right flank, the Israelis took on Syrian forces located in eastern Lebanon.³⁴¹ Unlike the PLO, the Syrians maintained a robust integrated air defense (IAD) system that the IAF had to defeat to gain

³²⁷ *ibid.*, 537.

³²⁸ Lon O. Nordeen, *Air Warfare in the Missile Age* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 99. Also, Corum, 400.

³²⁹ Corum, 401.

³³⁰ *ibid.*

³³¹ *ibid.*

³³² *ibid.*

³³³ *ibid.*

³³⁴ *ibid.*

³³⁵ Corum, 404 and Van Crevald, 289.

³³⁶ Corum, 404.

³³⁷ Van Crevald, 291.

³³⁸ *ibid.*

³³⁹ *ibid.*

³⁴⁰ *ibid.*

³⁴¹ Corum, 404.

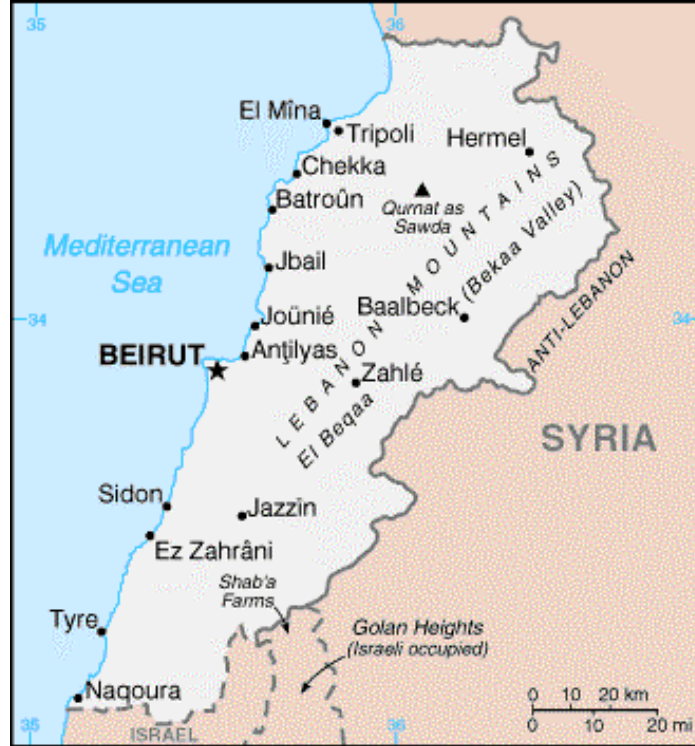


Figure 4. Lebanon

Source: Map of Israel used by permission of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, on-line, Internet, 18 March 2003, available from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia02/lebanon_sm02.gif

air-superiority.³⁴² On 9 June, the IAF launched a coordinated attack, which initially used remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs) to lure the Syrian surface-to-air missile (SAM) operators to turn on their radars and expose their location.³⁴³ With their radars on, F-4s and F-16s launched High Speed Anti-Radiation Missiles that homed in on the activated SAM radars as well as following through with cluster bomb attacks.³⁴⁴ In sum, the IAF eliminated 17 of 19 SAM sites.³⁴⁵ During the attack the Syrians launched fighters to engage the IAF. The first day, with the help of IAF Hawkeye airborne surveillance radar aircraft, the IAF shot down 29 Syrian fighters.³⁴⁶ On the next day, 35 additional Syrian fighters were bested.³⁴⁷ Remarkably, in the two days of aerial combat, the IAF lost no aircraft.³⁴⁸

Five days after initiating PEACE FOR GALILEE, the Israelis had the PLO trapped within the confines of Beirut.³⁴⁹ At this point, the Israelis faced three options: withdraw, engage with ground forces, or lay siege to Beirut with artillery and airpower. Faced with the opportunity to totally defeat the PLO, Israel took it. Thus, the first option was ruled out. The second option of going in on the ground would have cost

³⁴² *ibid.*

³⁴³ Van Crevald, 295.

³⁴⁴ *ibid* and Corum, 404.

³⁴⁵ Corum, 404.

³⁴⁶ *ibid.*

³⁴⁷ *ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *ibid.*

³⁴⁹ *ibid.*

many Israeli casualties as well as heavy losses to civilians. The Israelis took the option of putting Beirut under siege, which they successfully accomplished.³⁵⁰ After several weeks of siege, the PLO agreed to a cease-fire and was allowed exile in other Arab states.³⁵¹

During this initial campaign, the IAF performed “brilliantly.”³⁵² Says James Corum, “The IAF flew thousands of sorties and brought accurate fire upon the PLO and Syrians. The attack helicopters proved their worth as highly lethal and precise weapons systems. The AH-1 Cobras and MD 500 Defenders fired 137 TOW missiles with 99 reported hits—killing 29 tanks, 56 vehicles, 4 radar sites and other targets. In addition to employing attack helicopters and precision munitions the IAF used a variety of RPVs as intelligence platforms. The RPVs performed very effectively to provide real-time intelligence on Syrian and PLO defenses to the IAF commanders. The RPVs were also used as laser designators so that fighter-bombers could drop precision munitions. IAF losses in the campaign were low. In addition to four helicopters lost in the battle at Beaufort Castle, an A-4 Skyhawk and an AH-1 Cobra were lost to ground fire in the first two days of the campaign. In July, an RF-4 was lost.”³⁵³

These lessons would not be lost to the IDF, as will be shown later in this chapter.

However, the victory was bittersweet. Much of the western press portrayed the IAF attacks as “terror-bombing” which brings forth such images as the Dresden and Tokyo firebombings.³⁵⁴ However, Israel strove to strike only military targets and attempted to minimize collateral damage. Had this not been the case, civilian casualties would have been much higher than they were.³⁵⁵ Ironically, the PLO ignored these same conventions and was not held accountable for their actions.³⁵⁶ Apparently, when faced by the world’s press and their impact on public opinion, it is much better to be David than Goliath.³⁵⁷

It is useful to examine the effect of the Lebanon invasion on Israeli politics. As the PLO became weaker in Lebanon, portions of the Israeli government began to denounce Peace For Galilee as unnecessary and not needed in the defense of Israel. By August, Prime Minister Begin began publicly defending Peace For Galilee against its opponents.³⁵⁸ Members of the IDF in Lebanon also disagreed with national policy. One field commander refused to open fire on a section of Beirut that contained civilians. The commander

³⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 407.

³⁵¹ *ibid.*

³⁵² *ibid.*, 405.

³⁵³ *ibid.*

³⁵⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 408.

³⁵⁶ *ibid.*

³⁵⁷ Corum details PLO activities and how western observers overlooked them. For example, he says, “In numerous cases clear violations of international law on the part of the PLO were ignored or explained away by [an] international commission. For example, the commission criticized Israel for bombing an anti-aircraft gun mounted on the roof of an apartment building. When the IAF bombed the gun, as many as 20 civilians were killed. Although international law allows for the bombing of clearly military equipment such as anti-aircraft guns, the commission nevertheless condemned the Israelis because anti-aircraft guns were ‘completely ineffective against the Israeli Air Force.’ The last statement is especially absurd as the IAF lost several aircraft to ground fire during the campaign.” Corum, 409.

³⁵⁸ Van Crevald, 298.

even refused to fire after being ordered to do so by Sharon. Eventually, the colonel was discharged.³⁵⁹ When called to active duty, a few reservists questioned the legitimacy of the war and refused to serve indicating that they preferred to go to jail.³⁶⁰ Popular Israeli support for the offensive was initially 93.3%.³⁶¹ However, one month into the war, popular support fell to 66 percent.³⁶² After news reached home that Lebanese Christians (allied to the IDF) massacred several hundred Palestinian women and children in the village of Sabra-Shatilla on 16 September, support for Peace For Galilee plummeted.³⁶³ On 25 September, over 400,000 Israelis (11% of Israel's population) took part in a protest demonstration in Tel Aviv.³⁶⁴ By December, popular support plummeted to 34%.³⁶⁵

In 1985, Shimon Peres, the new prime minister, withdrew the IDF almost completely from Lebanon.³⁶⁶ To try and negate rocket attacks, Israel maintained a narrow security zone along southern Lebanon.³⁶⁷

The PLO threat was gone. But, what filled the void was a much more insidious opponent. The invasion of Lebanon provided the impetus for groups of like-minded Shiite Moslems to form into an organization known as Hizbullah (party of God).³⁶⁸ Hizbullah declared their objective of forcing the IDF out of Lebanon.³⁶⁹ Learning from the PLO – that it was impossible to defeat the IDF conventionally – Hizbullah turned to terror tactics.³⁷⁰ Based on their extremist religious interpretations, Hizbullah commanders easily recruited members to attack the IDF and Israelis at large using suicide bombing attacks.³⁷¹ The classic example of this was the 1983 Hizbullah suicide truck bombing that killed 300 American Marines in Beirut.³⁷²

Israel relied on all arms of the IDF to defend against Hizbullah attacks. As with Peace For Galilee, airpower played a significant role in this as well. Helicopter gunships were found to be more nimble than fast moving fighter aircraft and they played an increasingly important role.³⁷³ Combined with sound intelligence, helicopters along with commandos were used to kill or seize Hizbullah leaders.³⁷⁴ However, try as they might, Israel was never able to put a stop to Hizbullah terrorism. Much like the American experience in Vietnam and the Soviets in Afghanistan, the war of attrition began to work against

³⁵⁹ *ibid*, 299.

³⁶⁰ *ibid*.

³⁶¹ *ibid*.

³⁶² *ibid*, 298.

³⁶³ *ibid*.

³⁶⁴ *ibid*, 299.

³⁶⁵ *ibid*. Also, it is important to note that support for Peace For Galilee began to dwindle prior to the revelation of the Sabra-Shatilla massacre.

³⁶⁶ *ibid*, 303.

³⁶⁷ *ibid*.

³⁶⁸ Corum, 410. Arabic interpretation of Hizbullah from Van Crevald, 303.

³⁶⁹ Van Crevald, 304.

³⁷⁰ Corum, 412.

³⁷¹ *ibid*.

³⁷² *ibid*.

³⁷³ Van Crevald, 305.

³⁷⁴ *ibid*.

Israel. Used as an indicator of success, the kill ratio is telling. Beginning in 1990, the IDF killed 5.2 enemy for every IDF soldier killed.³⁷⁵ However, by 1993, that number had fallen to 1.71 for every IDF soldier killed.³⁷⁶ Hizbullah's deputy secretary general called it accurately when he said, "When an Israeli soldier is killed, senior Israeli officials begin crying over his death... Their point of departure is preservation of life, while our point of departure is preservation of principle and sacrifice."³⁷⁷ Finally, the war of attrition took its toll and Israel completely withdrew from Lebanon in 2000.³⁷⁸

From the operations in Lebanon, three lessons emerged. First, while assassinating terrorist leaders impacted enemy operations for a time, others quickly replaced them.³⁷⁹ Second, Israel had a much more difficult time infiltrating the smaller, closer-knit Hizbullah organization than they did the PLO.³⁸⁰ Finally, the asymmetric manner in which Hizbullah operated prevented them from concentrating and rarely offered the IAF the lucrative targets that they had with the PLO.³⁸¹ These lessons will replay themselves during the second Intifada as well as can be seen in America's ongoing war on terrorism. This lack of high-value targets that Al Qaeda offered President Clinton was also seen during Operation Infinite Reach. As previously noted, following the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel seized and occupied the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank to include all of Jerusalem. The Gaza Strip is an area roughly two times larger than Washington, D.C. or 360 square kilometers.³⁸² At the end of 1999, over 1.1 million Palestinians were jammed into this relatively small area.³⁸³ In contrast, the West Bank is nearly the size of Delaware or 5,860 square kilometers.³⁸⁴ In 2000, approximately 2,020,298 Palestinians occupied this area. In contrast to the relatively small number of Jewish settlers in the Gaza (6,500 in 1999), 171,000 Jewish settlers in 231 settlements are scattered throughout the West Bank.³⁸⁵ Israeli occupation methods of the two areas helped bring about the first Intifada. According to Martin Van Creveld, since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories, the occupying Israeli forces became masters at repression.³⁸⁶ Beginning in 1967, Israel forced as many Palestinians as possible to leave the occupied territories.³⁸⁷ Adding to the friction for the Palestinians that stayed behind, the Israelis forced an elaborate licensing system requiring Israeli approval for such mundane things such as getting a telephone or more serious needs such as opening a business.³⁸⁸ Israeli Chief of Staff Eytan described that the purpose of this "chicanery 'was to' make the

³⁷⁵ Van Creveld, 306.

³⁷⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷⁷ Corum, 413.

³⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 415.

³⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 414.

³⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 411.

³⁸¹ *ibid.*, 412.

³⁸² Cordesman, 162.

³⁸³ *ibid.*, 63.

³⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 173.

³⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 162, 176.

³⁸⁶ Van Creveld, 340.

³⁸⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸⁸ *ibid.*



Figure 5. Israel

Source: Map of Israel used by permission of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, on-line, Internet, 18 March 2003, available from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia02/israel_sm02.gif

Arabs run about like drugged beetles in a bottle.”³⁸⁹ Over time, searches, seizures and harassment became the norm.³⁹⁰

The incident sited as starting the first Intifada was an ordinary accident on 8 December 1987 involving an Israeli truck and four Palestinians who were subsequently killed.³⁹¹ The funeral the next day quickly flared out of control and the rioting spread from the Gaza to the West Bank.³⁹² The Israelis were taken off guard by the escalating emotions, as was also the case of the PLO in Tunis. Over the next few months, the Occupied Territories degenerated into spasms of spontaneous or PLO directed violence.³⁹³ Well-equipped for conventional war, the IDF was sorely challenged trying to react to stone-throwing Palestinian youths or inflamed mobs of protestors.³⁹⁴ Between 1987 and 1993, over 1,200 Palestinians were

³⁸⁹ *ibid.*

³⁹⁰ *ibid.*

³⁹¹ *ibid.*, 342.

³⁹² *ibid.*

³⁹³ *ibid.*, 343.

³⁹⁴ *ibid.*

killed in efforts to control the uprising.³⁹⁵ To deal with the first Intifada, the IDF instituted detailed rules of engagement (ROE).³⁹⁶

To try and deal with the Intifada, the IDF provided detailed rules of engagement (ROE) for its troops.³⁹⁷ The war in Lebanon showed how quickly public opinion turned against Peace For Galilee when it was perceived that the IDF had overstepped its bounds. Clearly, having forces trained for conventional conflict engaged in riot control was a source of concern - especially with the increased presence of the press doggedly looking for cases of IDF excesses.³⁹⁸ Simply put, the IDF was forced to accept a very difficult mission and this impacted morale and performance at all levels.³⁹⁹ An ancient Chinese proverb aptly describes this by saying, “A sword, plunged into salt water, will rust.”⁴⁰⁰

The first Intifada spent itself out sometime around 1997, but the issues, passions and hatreds that initiated it about were only suppressed waiting to re-emerge.⁴⁰¹ In 1993, it was hoped that the Oslo peace accords would bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, as history shows, this was not to be. Appendix one at the end of this chapter chronicles the rise and fall of the Oslo accords and also shows the complexity of the issues involved, the violence and the beginning of the second Intifada

What caused peace to fail? Anthony Cordesman, Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy, Center for Strategic and International Studies, claims that the root cause might have occurred as early as 1995, with the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin by an Israeli extremist.⁴⁰² However, the process went on for another five years. By the time Sharon made his famous visit to the Temple Mount, the Israelis and the Palestinians were “so close, but yet so far.” On the Israeli side, they were not prepared to go back to the 1967 borders of the West Bank.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁵ *ibid*, 344.

³⁹⁶ *ibid*, 346.

³⁹⁷ *ibid*.

³⁹⁸ *ibid*.

³⁹⁹ IDF commanders, responsible for the conduct of their men, found themselves more and more on the defensive. Of those serving in the Occupied Territories between 1987 and 1994, approximately three IDF members were investigated or sent to trial for their actions. At one point, seventy percent of the officers serving in the Palestinian areas faced judicial proceeding in which they had to defend themselves. A 1995 survey shows the impact on the IDF troops serving in the Occupied Territories. An alarming 72% indicated that serving in the Occupied Territories was highly demoralizing. Further, nearly half (46%) observed “inappropriate behavior” towards Palestinian civilians. Remembering that Israel has a mandatory conscription policy, the impact that these sentiments had were significant. “According to the chief of [IDF] manpower, 40% of those whose age and military background qualify them for reserve service do not even appear on the lists. Another 30 percent have succeeded in evading service by various means, so that only 30 percent actually serve. Finally, among those who are called up, only about 50 percent bother to report. As of late 1996, [IDF] Chief of Staff Shachak described their morale as ‘critical.’” Can Crevald. 349-351.

⁴⁰⁰ *ibid*, 348.

⁴⁰¹ *ibid*.

⁴⁰² Cordesman, 4.

⁴⁰³ Cordesman discusses the dramatic increase in Israeli settlement growth in the West Bank from 1967 to the late 1990s. Between 1993 and 2000 alone, there was a “72 percent growth in the settler population” in

It is important to note that the second, and current, Intifada (beginning in September of 2000) is different than the first Intifada (1987-1997). The first Intifada took its impetus from the spontaneous release of years of pent up emotions driven by repression.⁴⁰⁴ It was not a battle for statehood, rather one in which a body of people demanded recognition.⁴⁰⁵ During this period, the Palestinians lacked a central organizing body – the PLO was still in exile in Tunis.⁴⁰⁶ Significantly, during the first Intifada, the Palestinians were armed mostly with rocks and homemade weapons.⁴⁰⁷ Oslo changed all of this. Arafat and the PLO were allowed to return to the Occupied Areas and permitted to create an organizing body, the Palestinian Authority (PA), following the Oslo Accords in 1993. When the second Intifada began, the PA provided a unified (although, at times, arguably fractured and contested) direction to the rebellion. Further, the Palestinians were now *armed* with modern, albeit mostly light, weapons.⁴⁰⁸ Adding to this, they had trained soldiers under their authority with which to oppose the IDF.⁴⁰⁹ Table two shows the forces opposed to Israel at the beginning of the second Intifada. Adding an element of complexity that Israel must face is the rise of non-PA forces such as Hamas, the Palestine Islamic Jihad, and Hizbollah. This all shows that Israel and the IDF face a war against a non-aligned multi-group opponent.

Table 2. Status of Palestinian Forces Prior to the Second Intifada

Source: Table two directly quoted from Cordesman, 138.

Military and Paramilitary Strength of Key Palestinian Factions and The Hizbollah Before the Second Intifada Began
<p>Palestinian Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35,000 Security and paramilitary pro-PLO forces enforcing security in Gaza and Jericho, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Public Security (14,000) – 6,000 in Gaza and 8,000 in West Bank o Civil police (10,000) – 4,000 in Gaza and 6,000 in West Bank o Preventive Security (3,000) – 1,200 in Gaza and 1,800 in West Bank o General Intelligence (3,000), o Presidential Security (3,000), o Military Intelligence (500), and o Additional forces in Coastal Police, Air Force, Customs and Excise Police Force, University Security

the West Bank. On top of the settlements, Jerusalem naturally expanded its borders. Questions such as what portion of the growth was Jewish or Palestinian proved vexing. Cordesman, 178.

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 65.

⁴⁰⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ *ibid.*

Service, and Civil Defense.

- Equipment includes 45 APCs, 1 Lockheed Jetstar, 2 Mi-8s, 2 Mi-17s, and roughly 40,000 small arms. These include automatic weapons and light machine guns. Israeli claims they include heavy automatic weapons, rocket launchers, anti-tank rocket launchers and guided weapons, and man portable anti-air missiles.

- The PA wants 12,000 more security forces after further withdrawals. Israel has proposed some 2,000.

Pro-PLO

- Palestinian National Liberation Army (PNLA)/Al Fatah - 5,000-8,000 active and semi-active reserves that make up main pro-Arafat force, based in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen under the tight control of the host government.

- Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) - Abu Abbas Faction - 300-400 men led by Al-Abbas, based in Syria.

- Arab Liberation Front (ALF) - 300-400 men based in Lebanon and Iraq.

- Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) - 400-600 men led by Naif Hawatmeh, which claims eight battalions, and is based in Syria, Lebanon, and elsewhere.

- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) - 800 men led by George Habash, based in Syria, Lebanon, West Bank, and Gaza.

- Palestine Popular Struggle Front (PSF) - 600-700 men led by Samir Ghawsha and Bahjat Abu Gharbiyah, based in Syria.

Anti-PLO

- Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) - 350 men in various factions, led by Assad Bayud al-Tamimi, Fathi Shakaki, Ibrahim Odeh, Ahmad Muhana, and others, based in the West Bank and Gaza.

- Hamas - military wing of about 300 men, based in the West Bank and Gaza.

- As-Saiqa - 600-1,000 men in pro-Syrian force under Issam al-Qadi, based in Syria.

- Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC)/Abu Nidal Organization (ANO) - 300 men led by Abu Nidal (Sabri al-Bana), based in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.

- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC) - 600 men led by Ahmad Jibril, based in Syria, Lebanon, elsewhere.

- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - Special Command (PFLP-SC) - 50-100 men led by Abu Muhammad (Salim Abu Salem).

- Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) - 4,500 men, based in Syria.

- Fatah Intifada – 400-1,000 men led by Said Musa Muragha (Abu Musa). Based in Syria and Lebanon.

Hizbollah (Party of God),

- Several hundred actives with several thousand men in support, Shi'ite fundamentalist, APCs, artillery, MRLs. ATGMs, rocket launchers, AA guns, SA-7s, AT-3 Sappers.

Finally, via the Oslo Accords, many Palestinians had experienced autonomy under PA rule and the dream of a Palestinian state is enticingly close. Cordesman says, “In contrast [from the First Intifada], [the evidence] shows all too clearly that the Second Intifada quickly became a real war in which Israel increasingly used advanced weapons and technology, and reoccupation of Palestinian areas try to attack and intimidate the Palestinians while minimizing its casualties. The Palestinians, in turn, increasingly turned to the use of small arms, mortars, suicide attacks, and bombings. Israel made extensive use of economic warfare, and its alliance with the US put pressure on the

Palestinians, while the Palestinian side has attempted to mobilize the Arab and Islamic world, and the support of Europe and most developing countries to take political and economic action against Israel.⁴¹⁰

Finally, it is important to note that during the second Intifada, Israel has applied three strategies, which can be seen as phases in dealing with the Palestinians. The first phase (beginning in September) emphasizes containment rather than a direct engagement via occupation.⁴¹¹ This first phase was an attempt to keep the Palestinians inside the Occupied Territories and away from the Jewish areas thereby minimizing risk.⁴¹² The second phase (beginning in August 2001) shifted from containment to engagement.⁴¹³ It was felt that the IDF's inability to stop the suicide bombings in Jewish areas dictated a change in tactics. This change resulted in IDF incursions into the Occupied Territories that directly engaged the Palestinians with IDF ground forces.⁴¹⁴ The final and current phase (beginning in March 2002) starts with Israel's position that Yasser Arafat is to blame for the second Intifada and the need to separate him from a position of relevance.⁴¹⁵ Understanding these phases helps show how the IDF has used airpower to fight this current Intifada.

The Selection of Airpower

The IDF's operation against the Intifada provides an example of how airpower can be employed in a combined arms approach to combat terrorism. As shown in Lebanon, airpower is central to Israeli anti-terrorism operations. A look at the previously mentioned phases of operations shows why airpower was included in each of these different periods.

In the first phase, containment and isolation, IAF helicopters and jets employed precision weapons to target terrorists and their facilities while IDF ground forces

⁴¹⁰ *ibid*, 66.

⁴¹¹ *ibid*.

⁴¹² *ibid*.

⁴¹³ *ibid*, 68.

⁴¹⁴ *ibid*.

⁴¹⁵ *ibid*, 81.

attempted to stop the flow of terrorism into Jewish territories.⁴¹⁶ Airpower allowed the IDF to engage some selected targets with minimal risk to IDF forces. Helicopters, assisted by UAVs for target acquisition, gave the IDF a day and night precision attack capability⁴¹⁷ This is significant due to the IDF's experiences in Lebanon and the mounting losses with the deleterious impact on troop and public morale. In the eyes of the PLO, Hizbullah was able to drive the IDF out of southern Lebanon through its war of attrition.⁴¹⁸ Minimizing IDF losses would minimize the effectiveness of this PLO strategy.

During the second phase of operations involving more aggressive ground tactics, airpower was able to provide IDF ground forces with mobile covering fire and provide aerial intelligence. As the Palestinians have refined their ability to engage and destroy IDF Merkava-3 tank (Palestinians destroyed the first of these on 14 February 2002 by luring it into a trap and destroying it and killing its crew with a 80kg bomb), firepower provided by helicopter gunships can operate in areas deemed too hazardous for IDF tanks.⁴¹⁹ Regarding intelligence, airborne platforms (such as UAVs and helicopters) enabled the IDF to identify hard to find ambushes located on rooftops, etc., before they posed a threat to ground forces.⁴²⁰ UAVs or observers in helicopters often direct the movement of IDF ground forces during their tactical operations.⁴²¹

Finally, as the IDF began operations to discredit Arafat, airpower was able to pound PA infrastructure and isolate Arafat – leaving him defenseless against the IDF.⁴²² Apache gunships and F-16s employing laser-guided bombs have been used to accurately demolish PA targets.

Common to all of the phases is the recognition that airpower provides the IDF with an asymmetric weapon that the Palestinians are nearly incapable of defending against.⁴²³ Also, Israel sees airpower as a way to signal its intentions. According to

⁴¹⁶ *ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ Cordesman, 187.

⁴¹⁸ David Eshel, "Shaping Palestinian Security," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, November 2000, 25.

⁴¹⁹ Ed Blanche, "Israel Faces War of Attrition as Intifada Reaches Critical Mass," *Jane's International Review*, April 2002, 45.

⁴²⁰ *ibid.*

⁴²¹ *ibid.*, 24.

⁴²² Cordesman, 81.

⁴²³ *ibid.*, 66.

Deputy Defense Minister Ephraim Sneh, gunship attacks on PA infrastructure showed that the IDF was no longer being used as a retaliatory response to terrorists' attacks.⁴²⁴ Further, again according to Sneh, the use of airpower signaled Israel's willingness to use "more sophisticated measures" that the Palestinians would be unable to defend against.⁴²⁵ Finally, this message showed that Israel was willing to go on the offensive.⁴²⁶

The Objectives

In the broadest sense, Israel's objectives against the current Intifada clearly revolve around using force to stop the terrorism. In fact, Sharon will not negotiate further with the PA until the terrorist attacks have ceased.⁴²⁷ According to Asser of the *BBC*, "Mr Sharon laid down stringent conditions on return to talks – to restore security rather than revive the peace process – demanding a cessation of Palestinian violence first."⁴²⁸ For ease of discussion, however, the objectives can be lumped into three categories. The first is deterrence to stop future attacks. The second is punishment and retaliation for those attacks that have occurred. Finally, the Israelis have attempted to coerce Arafat into stopping Palestinian terrorism.

As indicated, a primary objective is to deter future attacks. One of the primary tools employed by the IDF in deterrence is through the use of selective assassinations. Dr. Joshua Sinai, a senior policy analyst at the Regional Conflict division, ANSER, describes Israel's "extra-judicial killings as "actions intended to thwart acts of terror in the future."⁴²⁹ Charles Krauthammer wrote in *Time*, that, "Israel has responded the only way it can, and precisely as any other country would. When, in 1986, the U.S. found Libya responsible for a terrorist bombing that killed American soldiers in a Berlin discotheque, it did not send Muammar Gaddafi a subpoena. It bombed his barracks. The object of such attacks is

⁴²⁴ Cordesman, 15.

⁴²⁵ *ibid.*

⁴²⁶ *ibid.*

⁴²⁷ Martin Asser, "Israel's Struggle for Security," *BBC News*, 26 September 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 1 February 2003, available from http://newswww.bbc.net.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2269430.stm.

⁴²⁸ *ibid.*

⁴²⁹ Dr. Joshua Sinai, "Intifada Drives Both Sides to Radical Arms," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, May 2001, 34.

twofold. If you're lucky, you get the chief perpetrator. And if you're not, you have sent a message that the enemy cannot operate with impunity, bringing a measure of deterrence to his calculation [I]t cannot stop them all. But even one mass murder pre-empted is justification enough."⁴³⁰ Finally, targeted assassination attempts to deter leaders involved in planning suicide attacks by threatening, arguably, the most important thing to them – their lives.⁴³¹ For them, the message is quite simple; "You may be next."⁴³²

Another objective falls under the category of "an eye for an eye." Airpower has been used extensively for retaliation and punishment under the hopes that the enemy can be attrited in battle. Following extensive airstrikes on PA facilities on 28 March 2001, the Israelis acknowledged that they were retaliating for a spate of terror attacks against Israeli civilians.⁴³³ Hirsch Goodman, analyst for the Jaffa Center for Strategic Studies, said, "The message is that we are at war, we are going to hurt targets that are painful to the president [Arafat], but will not cause international empathy and sympathy. We are going to avoid hitting civilians. We are going to concentrate on you and your forces."⁴³⁴ In December 2001, Ariel Sharon said, "We will pursue those responsible, the perpetrators of terrorism, its supporters and those who send them. We will pursue them until we catch them, and they will pay the price."⁴³⁵ Clearly, if selective assassinations do not deter terrorists, they do constitute, in the opinion of the IDF, an effective form of punishment.

Finally, the Israelis have applied force with the objective of coercing Arafat to denounce the terrorist attacks and take concrete steps to stop them. In December 2001, Israel tried to coerce Arafat through the use of airstrikes into cracking down on the planners and perpetrators of the suicide bombings.⁴³⁶ Of this same episode, Brigadier General Ron Kitrey, an Israeli Army spokesman said, "Friends, we've had enough, take

⁴³⁰ Charles Krauthammer, "In Defense of 'Assassination,'" *Time* 158, no. 8 27 August 2001, 32.

⁴³¹ Josua Sinai, "Aggressive Measures," *Armed Forces Journal International*, May 2002, 84.

⁴³² *ibid.*

⁴³³ "Beyond the Brink," *abc News.com*, 28 March 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 14 October 2002, available from http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/middleeastviolence_010328.html.

⁴³⁴ *ibid.*

⁴³⁵ "Israeli Strikes West Bank, Gaza," *North County Times (AP)*, 4 December 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 14 October 2002, available from <http://www.nctimes.net/news/2001/20011204/54619.html>.

⁴³⁶ Ibrahim Hazboun, "Israel Unleashes Airstrikes, Hitting Arafat's Compound," *The Detroit News (AP)*, 4 December 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 14 October 2002, available from <http://www.detnews.com/2001/nation/0112/04-358767.htm>.

responsibility that you have and stop the terrorism.”⁴³⁷ Shimon Peres, the Israeli Foreign Minister in 2001 said, “Arafat must . . . ‘arrest the troublemakers of the Palestinians, and . . . arrest them seriously and try to prevent further acts of violence and terror.”⁴³⁸ While not speaking for the IDF, Ehud Sprinzak, Professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, nicely outlines the Israeli coercive attempts by saying,

“The actual weakness of the suicide bombers is that they are nothing more than the instruments of terrorist leaders who expect their organisations to gain tangible benefits from this shocking tactic. The key to countering suicide bombers, therefore, is to make the terrorist organisations aware that their decisions will incur painful costs The Achilles heel of suicide terrorists is that they are part of a large operational infrastructure. It may not be possible to profile and apprehend would-be suicide bombers, but once it has been established that an organisation has resolved to use this kind of terrorism, security forces can strike against commanders who recruit and train the assailants and then plan the attacks.”⁴³⁹

How Airpower Is Employed

As was the case in Lebanon, the IDF has employed airpower during the current Intifada in multiple ways. The analysis will center on the phase of operation employed by the IDF since September of 2000. Airpower’s role as significant force multiplier will be examined.

During the first phase of operations, containment and isolation, (beginning in September 2000) airpower was used in a denial campaign to attrit PA and the different terrorism organizations ability to wage war against Israel while seeking to minimize IDF risk and losses.⁴⁴⁰ The Israeli response to December 2001 terror bombings provides another example of this airpower tactic. Following a killing

⁴³⁷ *ibid.*

⁴³⁸ Barzak.

⁴³⁹ David Eshel, “Israel Reviews Profile of Suicide Bombers,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, November 2001, 21.

⁴⁴⁰ According to Cordesman, “During October 2000, Israel made its first extensive use of attack helicopters to strike targets in the Gaza strip- and the West Bank. AH-64A Apaches were used to hit targets in Nablus and in Gaza, including Chairman Arafat’s compound. The AH-64 was used instead of the AH-1G/S Cobra because of its superior range, sensors, and weapons, and ability to better distinguish between civilians and ‘combatants.’” Cordesman, 67.

spree of that left 26 Israelis dead and 200 injured over an early December weekend, the IDF responded with a punishing assault on the infrastructure and assets that enabled the Palestinians to launch attacks.⁴⁴¹ The IDF used a combination of helicopters, F-16s and F-15Is (the Israeli export version of the F-15E) to attack multiple PA security targets in the West Bank – killing two PA members and injuring over 100 Palestinians.⁴⁴²

The IDF use of targeted assassinations (Israel calls them “targeted self-defense”) can be used to either attrit enemy fielded forces or kill senior leaders.⁴⁴³ In the former case, this is a denial strategy, in the latter, decapitation. Assassinations also serve as a statement to the PA; “If you won’t arrest those that wage war against us, we will eliminate them.” This method of engaging the enemy was quite successful during the long occupation of Lebanon. For example, in Lebanon in 1992, the IDF used a gunship to assassinate Hibullah’s Secretary-General, Sheikh Abbas Musawi, as he drove his vehicle in Lebanon.⁴⁴⁴ The Apache, firing Hellfire missiles, has been the weapon of choice for assassinations during the current Intifada.⁴⁴⁵ From October 2000 to December 2001, the IDF used Apaches to assassinate over 60 Palestinian militants.⁴⁴⁶ Many more assassinations have occurred since December 2001. One noteworthy example is the assassination of Sheik Salah Shehade on 22 July 2002.⁴⁴⁷ Through intelligence, the Israelis knew that Shahada was a key leader in Hamas. According to the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, “Shehade’s high-level involvement with Hamas included: controlling some of the most wanted Hamas terrorists, instigating the strategy of terrorism as directed against Israel, and significantly

⁴⁴¹ Alan Philps, “Israeli Sir Strikes Set Scene for Arafat’s Downfall,” *News.telegraph.co.uk*, 4 December 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 14 October 2002, available from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2001/12/04/wmid04.xml>.

⁴⁴² “IAF Launches Massive Airstrikes Across Gaza, West Bank,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 4 December 2001, n.p., Internet, 14 October 2002, available from <http://www.jpost.com/Editions/2001/12/04/News/News.39324.html>.

⁴⁴³ Ed Blanche, “Israel Uses Intifada Informers to Abet Assassination Campaign,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, December 2001, 23.

⁴⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁴⁶ Cordesman, 67.

⁴⁴⁷ David Eshel, “Israel Refines its Pre-emptive Approach to Counterterrorism,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, September 2002, 22.

improving Hamas' military capabilities."⁴⁴⁸ One accurately placed Mk-84 2000-pound bomb delivered by an IDF F-16 put an end to Sheikh Shehade's terrorist involvement.⁴⁴⁹

Finally, acting alone, airpower has been remarkably flexible and, in some ways, quite efficient at denying terrorist sanctuary following attacks. This is due to the integration of UAVs as target sensors and attack helicopters for target destruction. Their achievements have been significant, especially in light of the difficult urban environments that they work in.⁴⁵⁰

During the engagement phase (beginning in August 2001), Israeli airpower supported aggressive ground operations into the Occupied Territories. Clearly, these operations are also part of a denial strategy to engage and attrit Palestinian forces. One example of this is Operation Defensive Shield, launched by the IDF on 29 March 2002 into the West Bank.⁴⁵¹ Operation Defensive Shield was designed to engage and destroy terrorists, their support network and equipment.⁴⁵² In the refugee camp of Jenin, inhabited by over 13,000 Palestinians, fighting was intense.⁴⁵³ During one phase of the battle, hundreds of Palestinian gunmen were herded into buildings through the combined use of IDF ground forces and helicopters.⁴⁵⁴ During this operation, 1,600 Palestinians were detained of which 84 were known terrorist and significant amounts of arms were seized.⁴⁵⁵ During the infamous standoff at the Church of Nativity in April, an IDF small

⁴⁴⁸ "Shalah Shehade – Portrait of a Hamas Leader," IDF Spokesperson's Unit, n.p., on-line, Internet, 4 November 2002, available from <http://www.idf.il/newsite/english/salah.stm>.

⁴⁴⁹ James Reynolds, "Israel Reassess Gaza Attack," *BBC News*, 24 July 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 1 February 2003, available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/2150131.stm.

⁴⁵⁰ David Eshel reported, "Recent Israeli television footage showed film from a UAV cruising over a Gaza suburb at night. The footage revealed a heat source, indicating the launch of a rocket from a grove of trees. Moments later, a motorcycle was seen leaving the grove and joining the local highway to make a getaway. The rider then entered a house that exploded seconds later, hit by an air-launched missile guided to its target by the UAV controller. Such use of UAVs has become central to IDF operations in the West Bank and Gaza strip, and they are mainly used to track suspected gunmen and terrorist leaders." David Eshel, "Israel Hones Intelligence Operations to Counter Intifada," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, September 2002, 25.

⁴⁵¹ "Israel Makes Partial Withdrawal – Rewarded With Terror," *Israel News Agency*, n.p., on-line, Internet, 1 February 2003, available from <http://www.israelnewsagency.com/israelterrorbus.html>.

⁴⁵² *ibid.*

⁴⁵³ *ibid.*

⁴⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ The raid netted over "1,300 assault rifles, 387 sniper rifles, 49 anti-tank grenades, 256 machine guns, 58 bombs and 65 pounds of explosives. The IDF also found 11 explosive labs." *ibid.*

surveillance balloon orbited overhead providing live aerial reconnaissance for the surrounding IDF ground forces.⁴⁵⁶ The price Israel paid during Defensive Shield was 29 killed and 127 wounded.⁴⁵⁷

In June 2002, the IDF launched Operation Determined Path.⁴⁵⁸ The objective was to destroy the terrorists' support structure in the West Bank.⁴⁵⁹ Determined Path was a ground operation that consisted of massive house-by-house sweeps with airpower playing a major supporting role.⁴⁶⁰ UAVs were used extensively in support of ground forces.⁴⁶¹

Finally, during the entirety of the second Intifada the IDF has applied pressure on Arafat. This was exemplified in early December 2001 when the IAF used air-delivered ordinance delivered exceeding close to Arafat to try and force him to crack down on the militants.⁴⁶² These same attacks targeted four of Arafat's security apparatus buildings (the Tanzim militia and Force 17).⁴⁶³ Also, F-16 smashed Arafat's headquarters building in Jenin.⁴⁶⁴ Finally, at the same time two of Arafat's helicopters in Gaza were destroyed because, as General Ron Kitrey, the Israeli military spokesman, said, "[T]hey were symbols of his mobility and freedom."⁴⁶⁵ Anthony Cordesman summarized these attacks by saying, "During the first two weeks of December 2001, Israeli forces fired missiles on the headquarters of the Palestinian Military Intelligence in the West Bank town of Safit and attacked police stations in Jenin, as part of the trend to attack the

⁴⁵⁶ David Eshel, "Israel Refines its Pre-Emptive Approach to Counterterrorism," 25.

⁴⁵⁷ "Statistics on Operation "Defensive Shield (28 March-17 April 2002)," *Jewish Virtual Library*, n.p., on-line, Internet, 1 February 2003, available from <http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/History/defensiveshield.html>.

⁴⁵⁸ David Eshel, "Israel Refines its Pre-Emptive Approach to Counterterrorism," *Jane's International Review*, September 2002, 20.

⁴⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁴⁶¹ Eshel says, "In these operations, the IDF used new tactics, including newly introduced close-range Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAVs) used at brigade and even battalion level for target acquisition missions. Direct links between troops and UAV-mounted TV and video systems were used to pin-point individual suspects, thus completing and updating the ISA [Internal Security Agency who was conducting the searches] information given at pre-mission briefings with real-time intelligence." *ibid.*

⁴⁶² Hazboun.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ Arie O'Sullivan, "IAF Hits Arafat's Helicopters, Jenin HQ," *The Jerusalem Post*, 4 December 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 14 October 2002, available from <http://www.jpost.com/Editions/2001/12/04/News/News.39288.html>.

⁴⁶⁵ Barzak.

Palestinian Authority, its governing body, and its infrastructure. Israel linked its attacks on the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority to Arafat's lack of force in regulating terrorism."⁴⁶⁶ Airpower clearly delivered a message. These actions showed that Israeli airpower had the capability of making life exceedingly difficult for Arafat.⁴⁶⁷

Were The Objectives Achieved?

In December 2001, Ariel Sharon said, "This will not be a short problem and will not be easy, but we will win."⁴⁶⁸ This statement is significant because it brings to light the fact that Israel's fight against the second Intifada is still ongoing. Thus, any conclusions are tentative. However, I will try to provide an assessment to-date. It is important to note that airpower has been a tool normally used in a combined arms approach. As such, the issue of objective attainment will be considered from the combined operations perspective.

Looking at the objective of deterrence and preventing future attacks, it is apparent the Israelis have been able to curb, but not stop, the terrorism incidents. In an interview released in August 2002, Major General Amos Gilad, Israel's Co-ordinator of Government Activities in the Palestinian Territories, expressed that he felt IDF operations had prevented terrorist attacks.⁴⁶⁹ He said, "The plain fact is that since the Israel Defense Force re-entered [PA territories] the level of terror has significantly dropped. As regrettable as the situation is, there is a big difference between one terrorist activity every few days, which is of course unacceptable, and three terror attacks per day." A look at Operation Defensive Shield seems to support his assessment. Israeli intelligence officials admitted that they felt Defensive Shield had either killed or captured (70 men) 98% of the

⁴⁶⁶ Cordesman, 77.

⁴⁶⁷ Philps.

⁴⁶⁸ Bob Deans, "U.S. Careful in Distinctions, Backs Israel's Defense, Not War," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 3 December 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 14 October 2002, available from <http://www.jsonline.com/news/gen/dec01/midsid041200301.asp>.

⁴⁶⁹ Daniel Soberman, "Interview: Major General Amos Gilad, Israel's Co-ordinator of Government Activities in the Palestinian Territories," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 2002, 56.

known Hamas military activists in the West Bank.⁴⁷⁰ Further, IDF operations have created significant friction for the different terrorist groups in the occupied areas. The inability to move freely and the attrition on manpower have made an impact.⁴⁷¹

Selective assassinations also show that, given good intelligence, potential terrorist events can be stopped. The assassination of one Hamas commander is a case in point.⁴⁷² On 17 July 2001, the IDF dispatched two gunships that assassinated this commander using missiles as he sat in the back yard of his family's home in Bethlehem.⁴⁷³ According to the IDF, "Omar Saada, aged 45, was assassinated to thwart a major bomb attack inside the Jewish state."⁴⁷⁴

Clearly, both sides in this struggle are able to achieve a degree of punishment and retaliation. At times, it seems as though this is what this conflict is all about. The Palestinians retaliate to some Israeli action, among many options, by sending a terror-bomber on a suicide mission. In response the IDF retaliates against the Palestinians. In the cases where the IDF is not able to selectively assassinate terrorist or their leaders prior to their attacks, airpower tied with intelligence appears to be an excellent method of punishing those involved afterwards. Numerous examples of this exist. Cordesman brings to light one of these. He says, "On 13 February, 2001, two Israeli helicopter gunships dropped four missiles on the car of Massoud Ayyad, whom Israel held responsible for a failed mortar-bomb attack on a Jewish settlement in Gaza. Then caretaker-Prime

⁴⁷⁰ "Hard Times for Hamas," *Time* 160, no. 12 (16 September 2002): 16.

⁴⁷¹ According to *Time*, "With the Israeli army still in or around every West Bank town, it's no longer possible for cells to organize across different areas. They have to form and operate locally, which strains human resources. And with the crackdowns having removed so many leaders of the Izzedine al-Qassam military wing, political leaders who were not previously involved in terror attacks have been forced to fill the gap The blows against Hamas have prompted a debate in its ranks. Many of its activists are urging a temporary halt to terror attacks, fearing the group could be wiped out as a political as well as a military force" *ibid.* Also, In total, Defensive Shield raids into the West Bank netted 1,800 wanted criminals as compared to a total of only 900 arrested in all of 2001. Mohammed Najib, "Israel Takes Over West Bank Security," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 2002, 3. Finally, In July 2002, Defense Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer claimed that the intelligence gathered during Defensive Shield "helped thwart 86% of attempted bombings. Matt Rees, "The Terror That Will Not Stop," *Time* 160, no. 1 (1 July 2002): 22.

⁴⁷² Suzanne Goldberg, "Classwar," *Guardian Unlimited*, 31 July 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 1 February 2003, available from <http://education.guardian.co.uk/egweekly/story/0,5500,529701,00.html>.

⁴⁷³ *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁴ *ibid.*

Minister Barak declared that the killing sent the message to those who would attack Israel that ‘the long arm of the Israeli Defense Force will reach them.’”⁴⁷⁵

It appears that the Israelis have little success achieving the objective of coercing Yassar Arafat to honestly denounce terrorism and crack down on the terrorists. Following the much discussed December 2001 attacks on Arafat’s PA infrastructure, Arafat declared a state of emergency in the Palestinian areas and made overtures at confiscating illegal weapons but these moves seemed to be designed to placate the Israelis.⁴⁷⁶ His lack of seriousness, according to an Israeli military official is evidenced by the fact that Arafat arrested “very few, if any” of the 108 Palestinian names that the IDF forwarded to the PA.⁴⁷⁷ President Bush acknowledges this lack of seriousness as well. Ari Fleisher, the President Bush’s press secretary, said, “President Bush thinks it very important that the Palestinian jails not only have bars on front, but no longer have revolving doors at the back.”⁴⁷⁸

From the larger perspective, Israel has been able to limit but not stop the Palestinian terrorism. Stopping terrorism, one would hope, would be the ultimate objective. In a sobering prediction, as paraphrased by Daniel Sobelman, General Gilad said that “the current state of affairs regarding the Palestinians could last for another decade.”⁴⁷⁹ If this prediction is close to true, it appears that the bloodletting will continue for quite some time.

Lessons Learned

⁴⁷⁵ *ibid*, 68.

⁴⁷⁶ Barzak.

⁴⁷⁷ *ibid*.

⁴⁷⁸ Philips. Also, Major General Gilad, Israel’s Co-ordinator of Government Activities in the Palestinian territories, also acknowledges the limited effect coercion has had on Arafat. He said, “Arafat has generated the preconditions for the outbreak of the current terror, supplying the background and circumstances for the suicide campaign . . . beginning with his release of jailed murderers, never having prosecuted a single terrorist, and those murderers who were brought to court were only charged with acts committed against Palestinian security. Suicide bombers received outright encouragement, financial backing, including cash support to their families to set up mourning tents to receive well-wishers and the distribution of printed posters honouring their ‘martyred’ relative. All this is part of the assembly line in industry of murder and its glorification.” Sobelman, 56.

⁴⁷⁹ *ibid*.

According to the RAND study, *Aerospace Operations in Urban Environment*, American air planners should take note of the Israeli experiences in the Occupied Territories. As airman, we have the penchant of thinking of “going higher, faster, [and] farther.”⁴⁸⁰ RAND suggests that we may also need to think more about going “lower, slower and closer” to meet the needs of future combat operations in urban areas.⁴⁸¹ According to RAND, conflict in urban areas will increase, not decrease. RAND predicts that the growth of urbanization will make urban areas more often part of the battlefield.⁴⁸² While they admit that not all urban operations will involve combat, the possibility exists.⁴⁸³ However, “Where urban operations cannot be avoided, aerospace forces can make important contributions to the joint team, detecting adversary forces in the open; attacking those forces in a variety of settings; and providing close support, navigation and communications infrastructure, and resupply for friendly ground forces.”⁴⁸⁴ As this chapter has shown, during the second Intifada, IDF airpower has performed most, if not all, of these functions remarkably well. However, their performance has not been flawless.

Regarding coercion, however, one question must be asked. This is, why, as a quasi state-sponsor of terrorism does coercion appear not to work on Yassar Arafat when it did against Qadhafi? Certainly, the IDF has systematically targeted and destroyed items held dear to Arafat and the PA. Perhaps the biggest reason for this is that Arafat, while the popular leader of the Palestinians, recognizes his own tenuous position. First, Arafat is not the leader of a recognized state – though through the Oslo Accords the Palestinians came very close to achieving this. With this, Arafat’s hold on power is not yet complete. Second, Arafat is a secular leader. Throughout the Middle East, Muslim extremists are exerting pressure on these secular leaders. The Occupied Territories are no exception. Table two of this chapter shows the extremist groups not aligned with Arafat. Even those groups aligned with Arafat could easily break

⁴⁸⁰ “Aerospace Operations in Urban Environments,” RAND (Santa Monica, CA.: RAND, 2000), XX.

⁴⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁴⁸² *ibid.*, 199.

⁴⁸³ *ibid.*

⁴⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 200.

away. Thus, Arafat's walk to power in a future Palestine is like that of a tightrope walker in the circus.⁴⁸⁵ If Arafat gets tough on terrorism, he faces the risk of internal revolt. If he appears too soft on terrorism, he faces punishing Israeli coercion attacks.⁴⁸⁶ Anthony Cordesman notes, "As in the past, Arafat seemed to pursue a tactic of launching as little of a 'crackdown' on terrorism as politically necessary to help restore his international credibility, while maintaining his popular support among the Palestinian people."⁴⁸⁷ As an example of this, when Arafat tried to place Sheik Ahmed Yassin, a Hamas cleric leader, under house arrest, riots ensued.⁴⁸⁸

A key lesson that emerges is that military power alone is incapable of solving this Palestinian uprising. Clearly, there is a tremendous need for statecraft here. Joshua Sinai wrote in May 2002,

"[Israel's] ...combating-terrorism campaign is at its weakest point [in the Occupied Territories] because of the reliance on primarily military means to contain the al Aqsa [second] intifada in the absence of a consensus-based political/military mission area analysis (MAA) that links tactical actions on the ground to the attainment of the overall strategic objectives of using the most appropriate mix of coercive and conciliatory measures to resolving the Palestinian uprising once and for all. [S]uch a consensus – based MAA would have the capability of determining the country's future boundaries, the status of East Jerusalem and its outlying Jewish suburbs, and the fate of the Jewish settlers in the territories [where Israelis] have become increasingly threatened by [escalating] Palestinian violence."⁴⁸⁹

No matter how hard the IDF deters, threatens, punishes or coerces the Palestinians, events show that the terror attacks *cannot be stopped altogether*. Even with the success of Operation Defensive Shield, since its completion on 17

⁴⁸⁵ Cordesman, 78.

⁴⁸⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸⁸ Cordesman describes what happened, "1,000 Palestinians responded by marching to Yassin's home 'denouncing the Palestinian Authority as collaborators' and supporting Yassin with pro-Hamas statements. One of Yassin's personal guards was killed in a gun battle between Hamas gunmen and security officers, and Yassin, in the midst of the fighting, was able to escape with the assistance of Hamas members. After spending the night in hiding, Yassin was able to return home the next morning and Palestinian security forces were nowhere to be found. As groups like Hamas gained clout amongst the Palestinian people, the positions of Palestinian security forces have weakened in terms of their ability to arrest Palestinian terrorists when Arafat issues 'crackdowns.'" *ibid.*

⁴⁸⁹ Sinai, 85.

April 2002), as of July 2002 there were over sixty major terrorism attacks resulting in sixty-four deaths in Israel.⁴⁹⁰ After Defensive Shield, an Israeli military commander was quoted as saying, “In the long term, the Palestinian terror organizations will succeed in rebuilding their capabilities and resume attacks against Israeli targets.”⁴⁹¹

Another lesson, also seen in Operation El Dorado Canyon, is that when employing offensive airpower, collateral damage is often unavoidable. The previously discussed assassination of Salah Shehade serves as an example of this. What was not discussed was that fourteen others were killed during the assassination, among them nine children.⁴⁹² In July 2002, James Reynolds reported, “First off, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called it a great success. At last Israel’s most wanted man could be crossed off the list for good. But now, the mood has changed. Triumphalism has gone, replaced by a series of simple questions. Did Israeli leaders know they were going to bomb a crowded civilian area? If yes, then why did they go ahead with the attack? If no, then why did intelligence fail them?”⁴⁹³ Yossi Sarid, leader of the liberal opposition party said, “If you send an F-16 to a very heavily crowded city with a one-ton bomb you have to estimate from the very beginning that innocent people will be killed. So it was a very, very grave mistake of the Israeli Government.” Other examples of collateral damage exist. In December 2001, a missile fired at a PA security installation killed a fifteen-year-old boy while reportedly injuring hundreds, many of them school children running for cover.⁴⁹⁴ As Cordesman notes, “UAV sensors, radars and other devices can help [with intelligence] . . . [These sensors alone] cannot eliminate the risk of civilian casualties and collateral damage.

⁴⁹⁰ Rees, 22. Ending date of Operation Defensive Shield from Jewish Virtual Library, “Statistics on Operation ‘Defensive Shield.’”

⁴⁹¹ Najib, 3.

⁴⁹² Asser.

⁴⁹³ Reynolds.

⁴⁹⁴ Hadeel Wahdan, “Israel Strikes Hit Arafat Compound,” *First Coast News (AP)*, 4 December 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 14 October 2002, available from http://www.firstcoastnews.com/news/2001-12-04/usw_sharon.asp.

Targets do not remain fixed in war. Threats change location, and so do innocent civilians⁴⁹⁵

American policy makers, as was seen in the previous two chapters, also have an aversion to collateral damage.⁴⁹⁶ This all brings to light the need for an air-delivered low yield weapon. As RAND points out, the “vast majority of USAF weapons are unsuitable when the situation requires that lethal effects be limited to a room or other small area.”⁴⁹⁷ RAND indicated (that in 2000) only three weapons in the USAF inventory “fit into the room-sized category,” but each has limitations.⁴⁹⁸ In the meantime, the USAF has made use of RQ-1 Predator UAVs combined with Hellfire missiles which has a 20 pound warhead.⁴⁹⁹ While this combination is lethal, CNN reports that, “Nearly 30 Predators of 60 to 70 in the fleet have been lost since the plane entered service in 1994, according to an Air Force official.”⁵⁰⁰ Thus, numbers of available Predators as well as their survivability appears to be an issue.

As expected, the public relations battle has been an issue for both the Israelis and Palestinians. Ariel Sharon quickly likened the war against Palestinian terrorism the same as America’s post 9-11 war on terrorism. Sharon said, “President George Bush is acting against terrorism. We will act the same

⁴⁹⁵ Cordesman, 170.

⁴⁹⁶ RAND, 55-56.

⁴⁹⁷ *ibid*, 111.

⁴⁹⁸ RAND indicated (that in 2000) only three weapons in the USAF inventory “fit into the room-sized category,” but each has limitations. “One of them, the Low-Cost Autonomous Attack System (LOCAAS) [that employs a ten pound warhead], is not yet in production. Another, 40mm gun rounds from AC-130s may not be available for many scenarios because of survivability concerns. The third, 30mm gun rounds from an A-10, may be difficult to deliver at steep angles and in small enough numbers to limit damage to a single room. In addition, the A-10 shares many of the survivability problems of the AC-130 when operating at optimal altitudes and airspeeds over urban terrain.” To fill the void, RAND suggests using training weapons that do not contain explosive warheads; however, they do advocate developing “highly discriminating weapons whose effects can be tailored to meet the unique needs of each situation.” *Ibid*, 111-113, 187.

⁴⁹⁹ Size of Hellfire missile warhead size from RAND, 112. For status of the RQ-1 Predator Drone see Statement of Thomas J. Cassidy, JR., President and CE, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. to the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Research and Development, February 20, 2002. n.p., on-line, Internet, 13 February 2003, available from <http://www.house.gov/hasc/openingstatementsandpressreleases/107thcongress/02-02-20pace.html>.

⁵⁰⁰ Mike Mount, “U.S. Loses Many Military Drones,” *CNN.com/U.S.*, 2 January 2003, n.p., on-line, Internet, 13 February 2003, available from <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/01/02/sproject.irq.predator.losses/>.

way.”⁵⁰¹ Sensing his ability to play the underdog, Arafat claimed early on that Sharon was trying to undermine his capability to control terrorism.⁵⁰² “They (the Israelis) don’t want me to succeed and for this he (Sharon) is escalating his military activities against our people, against our towns, against our cities, against our establishments. He doesn’t want a peace process to start.”⁵⁰³ Anthony Cordesman feels that, as far as world opinion goes, Arafat is playing the winning hand.⁵⁰⁴ This comes as no surprise. Looking back to Lebanon, elements of the press, human-rights watchers and, in some cases, the United Nations overlooked clear violations of crimes by the Palestinians. Examples include placing anti-aircraft gunnery emplacements on top of apartment buildings and launching artillery strikes near populated areas anticipating an IDF counter-battery response with subsequent civilian casualties.⁵⁰⁵ The Palestinians use many of these tactics today. It is a reality that the world demands the IDF conduct itself under the recognized conventions of international law while at the same time turning a blind eye to the actions of the Palestinians. In short, this is a recognized double standard.⁵⁰⁶

This uphill public relations battle faced by Israel can be seen in the United Nations (U.N.). Just as they did during Operation Peace for Galilee, the U.N. has staunchly criticized Israeli operations despite the Israeli U.N. ambassador’s legitimate request to address the Palestinian terrorism tactics.⁵⁰⁷

During the early phase of the second Intifada, a high number of Israelis still supported the peace process. In January 2001, over 60% of Israelis still

⁵⁰¹ Deans.

⁵⁰² Wahdan.

⁵⁰³ *ibid.*

⁵⁰⁴ Cordesman says, “In general, however, one irony of asymmetric warfare is that the side that suffers most, or appears weakest, that tends to have the ‘edge’ in the battle of perceptions and the struggle for outside political support. Furthermore, the Palestinians have the advantage that far more of the world opposes Israeli settlements, and the Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza, than supports it Television imagery tends to favor the Palestinians. Occasional coverage of suicide bombings favors Israel but the fighting between well-equipped Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians using sniping, rock throwing, and small arms, is a political and media battle in which the IDF can only use decisive force at the cost of media images of Palestinian suffering As a result, Palestinian ‘martyrs’ become political weapons that can be as effective in their own way as Israeli heavy weapons.” Cordesman, 87.

⁵⁰⁵ Corum, 408.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 406.

⁵⁰⁷ Barzak.

supported reconciliation with the Palestinians. This came due to the realization that there was no alternative to a peaceful co-existence between the two peoples and that a return to the peace process with Arafat remained the only reasonable option.”⁵⁰⁸ However, since this poll, growing numbers of Israelis are developing anti-Palestinian feelings.⁵⁰⁹

The impact on IDF morale does not appear to have taken the negative course that it did in Lebanon. However, there have been some manifestations of negative moral. In May 2002, over 350 IDF reservists refused to serve in the Occupied Territories.⁵¹⁰ However, morale problems are limited, primarily due to the recognition of the seriousness of the situation and that these sacrifices are not being made for naught.⁵¹¹ Cordesman says, “The Second Intifada . . . is far more clearly a ‘war’ than the first Intifada While duty may not be popular, it seems to be perceived as necessary and justified. If anything, the Second Intifada seems to be a struggle where many in the IDF favor escalation and the use of decisive force, not one where there is much sympathy for the Palestinians.”⁵¹²

Also, it is apparent that Israel feels compelled to respond with force when struck for at least two reasons. First, from a geo-political perspective, Israel feels that their Arab neighbors would see a lack of response to a provocation as a sign of weakness. Israel feels that, in the Middle East, a show of weakness or resolve is tantamount to committing suicide. Second, the most important function of any government is to provide for the security of its people. With this, for domestic purposes, Israel also must

⁵⁰⁸ David Eshel, “Barak Stares Into the Abyss of Defeat,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, January 2001, 5.

⁵⁰⁹ Cordesman writes, Israeli public opinion polls issues in June 2001, found that only 30% of Israelis still believed in the peace process, 70% believed another war was likely. Some 72% of Israelis said they had more negative views of Palestinians as a result of the second Intifada versus 53% who said the same thing about the first Intifada in 1988. For some Israelis, these feelings are an incentive to commit acts of violence. There is a small growing minority that feels that all Palestinians should be expelled from Israel, that far more violent action should be taken to deter Palestinian violence, and that private acts of violence against the Palestinians are justified. On the far right, Israel’s tourism minister, Rehavam Zeevi – who was assassinated by the PFLP on October 17, 2001 – referred to the estimated 180,000 Palestinians working and living illegally in Israel as “lice,” and stated that, “They arrived here and are trying to become citizens because they want social security and welfare payments. We should get rid of the ones who are not Israeli citizens the same way you get rid of lice. We have to stop this cancer from spreading within us. While Ze’evi was on the margin of Sharon’s center-left coalition, he is scarcely alone.” Cordesman, 161.

⁵¹⁰ Sinai, 85.

⁵¹¹ Cordesman, 144.

⁵¹² *ibid.*

retaliate in kind. For these reasons, as long as the Palestinians resort to violence to further their agenda, we can expect Israel to reply to the challenges via the IDF.

In conclusion, the sense of helplessness, escalation and deepening hatred between the Palestinians and Israelis is not comforting. This is far from a localized affair. This enmity serves as fodder for the likes of Bin Ladin who use this as a tool to fan hatred, garner support, and spread fear, death and destruction around the world. Saddam Hussein tried to drive a wedge between the coalition aligned against him during the Gulf War by launching scud missiles into Israel. The 11 February 2003 Bin Ladin message aired around the world again played on Arab sensitivities to this issue by claiming that an American sponsored government in Iraq would bow down to Israel. Bin Ladin used this, amongst other points, to encourage Muslims around the world to launch suicide attacks against anything associated with America. As long as this wound festers, true peace is unlikely to be seen in the region, or perhaps, the world.

Appendix 1. The Oslo Negotiations

Source: Appendix one directly quoted from "Shattered Dreams of Peace: The Road from Oslo," *PBS Frontline*, n.p., on-line, Internet, 31 January 2003, available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/oslo/negotiations/> and <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/oslo/etc/cron.html>.

Event	Date	Description
Background		<p>The peace process began with the Oslo accord of 1993. It ended with the last negotiating sessions at Taba, Egypt, in 2001. Over seven years, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators struggled to reach an agreement that could end the 100-year Middle East conflict. In the many carefully negotiated agreements there were positive developments, but also severe setbacks.</p> <p>Deeper and deeper mistrust grew on both sides. Palestinians accused Israel of failing to stop expanding Jewish settlements and stalling on agreed withdrawals from West Bank territory. Israel accused Arafat and the Palestinian security forces -- which were established by Oslo -- of not cracking down on militant groups that were trying to sabotage the peace process.</p>
Oslo Accord	13 Sep 1993	<p>This was an historic turning point in Arab-Israeli relations. Hammered out in complete secrecy in Oslo, Norway, by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators acting without intermediaries, the Oslo Accord forced both sides to come to terms with each other's existence. Israel agreed to recognize Yasser Arafat as its partner in peace talks, and agreed to recognize Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by beginning to withdraw from the cities of Gaza and Jericho -- essentially exchanging land for peace. The Palestinians in turn recognized Israel's right to exist while also renouncing the use of terrorism and its long-held call for Israel's destruction. (A year later, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, and Yasser Arafat were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their roles in the Oslo accord.)</p> <p>Oslo sketched out a peace process with a two-phase timetable. During a five-year interim period, Oslo envisioned a series of step-by-step measures to build trust and partnership. Palestinians would police the territories they controlled, cooperate with Israel in the fight against terrorism, and amend those sections of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) charter that called for Israel's destruction. Israel would withdraw almost entirely from Gaza, and in stages from parts of the West Bank. An elected Palestinian Authority would take over governance of the territories from which Israel withdrew.</p> <p>After this five-year interim period, negotiators then would determine a final peace agreement to resolve the thorniest issues: final borders, security arrangements, Jerusalem, whether the Palestinians would have an independent state, Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, and Palestinian refugees' claims to land and property left behind when they fled Israel.</p>
The Gaza Jericho Agreement	4 May 1994	<p>Israeli forces withdraw from Gaza and Jericho, the first step in the peace process. Israel remains responsible for Israelis and settlements in these areas; Palestinians are now responsible for public order and internal security for Palestinians, and will act to prevent terror against Israelis in the areas under their control. Some 5,000 Palestinian prisoners who have not participated in attacks against Israelis will be released.</p>

Nobel Peace Prize	14 Oct 1994	Nobel Peace Prize awarded Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, and Yasser Arafat are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their roles in the Oslo accord.
Rabin Assassinated	4 Nov 1995	Following a peace rally in Tel Aviv, Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by a Jewish extremist. He is succeeded by Peres.
Israel to Withdraw from Major Palestinian Cities	8 Dec 1995	<p>Arafat and Peres meet to reaffirm their commitment to the Oslo accords. Israel would release 1,000 Palestinian prisoners. By the end of the month, Israel has also withdrawn its troops from an additional five major Palestinian cities.</p> <p>Within the Israeli opposition, these concessions are seen as a dangerous strategic mistake. And while many Palestinians rejoice, some -- including those in the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas, which gained power among Palestinians by controlling the mosques and providing food and education to the poor -- oppose any compromise with Israel.</p>
Palestinian Authority Holds First Elections	20 Jan 1996	Palestinian elections are held as required by the Oslo accord. Hamas, protesting peace negotiations with Israel, calls for a boycott of the elections. But Palestinians endorse the peace process by giving Arafat an overwhelming victory.
Suicide Attacks Kill Dozens; Palestinian Security Forces Arrest Thousands	25 Feb-4 Mar 1996	Several weeks after Israel assassinates Hamas' chief bomb-maker, Hamas retaliates. Three suicide attacks in eight days leave 46 dead and hundreds wounded. Then, on March 4, 1996, a fourth suicide bomber explodes himself, this time in a Tel Aviv mall. Thirteen people are killed and 157 more wounded; the dead are all under 17 years old. Arafat orders his security forces to move against the Islamic militants and some 2,000 people are arrested. The peace process -- and its principle advocate, Shimon Peres -- comes under increasing attack.
"Summit of Peace-makers" Convened at Sharm el Sheik	13 Mar 1996	Israeli opposition to the peace process coalesces around Benjamin Netanyahu, the new leader of the Likud Party who is poised to challenge Peres and his Labor Party in the upcoming election. Fearing Peres' defeat and the demise of the peace process, Egypt and the United States convene world leaders in the Sinai resort of Sharm el-Sheik. They call it the Summit of Peacemakers and hope to influence the Israeli electorate to support Peres.
Hezbollah-Israel Clash; Israel Accidentally Bombs U.N. Compound	11-18 Apr 1996	<p>Violence erupts along Israel's northern border. Hezbollah, the radical Shiite movement based in Lebanon that shares Hamas' disdain for the peace process, fires missiles into Israeli villages and towns, prompting Israel to launch a massive bombardment of Hezbollah bases in southern Lebanon. A week later, in a case of mistaken targeting, Israeli artillery hits a United Nations compound near the village of Kana, where civilians have sought shelter from the attacks. More than 100 are killed.</p> <p>Israeli Arabs, fervent supporters of Peres and his Labor Party, are now outraged and turn against him, calling for a boycott of the upcoming election</p>
Israeli Election	29 May 1996	<p>Netanyahu narrowly defeats Peres.</p> <p>Since Israeli Arabs constitute 20 percent of Israel's population, their boycott of the election helps elect Netanyahu: He defeats Peres by a mere one-half of 1 percent. At 47, he becomes Israel's youngest prime minister.</p>
Tense First Meeting Between Arafat and Netanyahu	4 Sep 1996	Arafat and Netanyahu meet at the Erez border crossing between Gaza and Israel. The meeting between the two men is fraught with tension, but their handshake, though largely ceremonial, is still a symbol of hope.

Netanyahu Opens Tunnel Along Western Wall in Jerusalem; Violent Protests Erupt	24 Sep 1996	<p>In an area extremely sensitive to both Muslims and Jews -- where the Al Aqsa mosque on the Temple Mount sits above the Western Wall -- Netanyahu changes the status quo and opens an ancient tunnel that runs along the wall. Netanyahu's security advisers had warned him against opening the tunnel, fearing that the move was too provocative.</p> <p>Palestinian radicals are quick to exploit the situation and organize demonstrations. The Israeli army fires upon the demonstrators and for the first time since the Oslo accord was signed, the Palestinian police use their guns against the Israeli army. Netanyahu gives the order to move Israel's tank forces into striking positions. The violence leaves 59 Palestinians and 16 Israelis dead. Hundreds more are wounded on both sides before Palestinian and Israeli security forces cooperate to bring an end to the fighting.</p>
Arafat, Netanyahu Attend Summit in Washing-ton, D.C.	1-2 Oct 1996	In an attempt to prevent further violence and restart negotiations, Arafat and Netanyahu are summoned to Washington by U.S. President Bill Clinton. Clinton also asks King Hussein of Jordan to join the talks. By the end of the summit, Netanyahu and Arafat agree to resume talks on further implementation of the Oslo accords.
Hebron Accord	15 Jan 1997	After four months of difficult negotiations, Israel agreed to transfer control of the West Bank city of Hebron to the Palestinian Authority. Unlike earlier withdrawals from the West Bank, 20 percent of the city -- the central area where more than 400 Jewish settlers lived among 130,000 Palestinians -- would remain under Israeli control. Palestinians cheered the withdrawal, but Jewish settlers felt betrayed by Prime Minister Netanyahu.
Construction Begins on Jewish Settlement Near Jerusalem	18 Mar 1997	Three weeks after Netanyahu gives the green light, construction begins on a settlement on a contested hill near Jerusalem. Although Jewish settlements were not mentioned specifically in the Oslo accords, Rabin had promised that no additional ones would be built. Tensions are high.
Suicide Bomber Strikes Tel Aviv	21 Mar 1997	In Tel Aviv, a suicide bomber explodes himself in a packed café.
Two Suicide Attacks Kill 16 in Jerusalem	30 Jul 1997	Two suicide attacks rip through Jerusalem's main market within 10 minutes of each other. Sixteen are killed and hundreds are wounded. In response, Israel limits access in and out of Palestinian territories and enforces a strict curfew.
Three suicide attacks in Jerusalem; Netanyahu Blocks Land Transfers to Palestinians	4 Sep 1997	Three more suicide bombers strike at the heart of Jerusalem. Five Israelis are killed and more than 200 wounded. Netanyahu declares that no more land will be handed over to the Palestinians as long as terror continues.
Jewish Settlers Occupy Houses in Arab Sections of Jerusalem	14 Sep 1997	Netanyahu allows Jewish settlers to occupy houses within Arab sections of Jerusalem, once again changing the status quo. Palestinians demonstrating against Jewish settlers are joined by groups of Israelis who oppose Netanyahu's policies.

Wye River Memorandum	15-23 Oct 1998	<p>After 18 months of stalemate in the peace process and increasing violence, President Clinton pushed to get Israeli and Palestinian leaders to make good on the promises made five years earlier in Oslo. The U.S. convened a summit at Maryland's Wye River Plantation. After a rocky start, Clinton's marathon 21-hour session with Yasser Arafat, Benjamin Netanyahu, and senior negotiators produced the Wye River Memorandum.</p> <p>The agreement allowed for the building of an international airport in the Gaza Strip. Israel agreed to pull back from an additional 13 percent of the West Bank and to release 750 Palestinian security prisoners. (Ultimately, only half of the pull-back is done and only 250 prisoners are released.) The Palestinian Authority agreed to combat terrorist organizations, arrest those involved in terrorism, and to collect all illegal weapons and explosives. (Little or none of this is ever done.)</p>
Clinton Visits Gaza; Palestinian National Council Rescinds Anti-Israel Clause	12-14 Dec 1998	In an extraordinary gesture, Clinton comes to Gaza to lend his prestige to the implementation of portions of the Wye agreements. In Clinton's presence, the Palestinian National Council takes a historic step: Its members vote to rescind the clause in the PLO Charter that calls for the destruction of the State of Israel. The extremists Arafat is supposed to control stage violent protests against the recognition of Israel.
Knesset Rebukes Netanyahu	4 Jan 1999	In Israel, the people who had brought Netanyahu into power see the handover of more territory -- as called for by Wye -- as an act of betrayal. The Knesset convenes in an extraordinary session. Over two-thirds of its members -- from all across the political spectrum -- rebuke Netanyahu and call for new elections. Opposing Netanyahu is Labor Party head Ehud Barak, a former chief of staff, Israel's most decorated military hero, and a disciple of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. He runs on a platform of peace and reconciliation with the Palestinians.
Barak Defeats Netanyahu in landslide	17 May 1999	Barak wins a landslide victory, becoming Israel's 14th prime minister. While his mandate is strong, Barak wants to push quickly for a permanent agreement, skipping the interim Israeli redeployments called for in the Wye accords. He envisions a two-state solution that will finally put an end to the conflict.
Barak, Arafat Meet; No Agreement on Redeployment	11 Jul 1999	Barak flies to the Erez crossing on the Israel-Gaza border for his first official meeting with the Palestinian leadership. The Palestinians expect to obtain a commitment from Barak to immediately implement the long-delayed Israeli redeployment. Barak dismisses the idea and the talks disintegrate.
Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum	3-5 Sep 1999	After five weeks of talks between the two principal negotiators -- Saeb Erekat for the Palestinians; Gilead Sher for Israel -- the two sides agree on a bold framework and timetable for the final peace agreement. It is signed by Arafat and Barak. The Palestinian and Israeli delegations assemble in Egypt at Sharm el-Sheik to celebrate the fruits of the negotiators' efforts. As a confidence-building measure, Israel agrees to release 350 security prisoners in two phases. The Palestinians agree to enforce the existing security understandings.
Negotiations Resume; Palestinians Chafe at Israelis' West Bank Proposal	Nov 1999	Land and the settlements -- still expanding under Barak -- become the main issues when negotiations resume. Questions remain over the 180,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza and how much land Israel will cede to the Palestinians. The Palestinians are outraged by the Israeli proposal, saying that it would cut the West Bank in three parts and allow Israel to continue the settlements.

		<p>Not long after, secret negotiations in Stockholm deal with another contentious issue -- the Palestinian refugees. Three million displaced people demand the right to return, a number roughly equal to half of the population of Israel. Their return would alter the nature of the Jewish state.</p>
Israel Withdraws From Southern Lebanon After 22 Years	24 May 2000	<p>Barak fulfills a campaign promise and ends Israel's 22-year occupation of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah, the Shiite Muslim fundamentalist militia that had been fighting the Israeli army in Lebanon for years, sees Israel's flight as a massive victory. Many Palestinians now believe they, too, can achieve their aims by fighting rather than negotiating.</p> <p>In Israel, Barak is under fire for his withdrawal from Lebanon and for being ineffectual with the Palestinians. He urges Clinton to hold a summit to resolve everything once and for all.</p>
Camp David Summit	11-25 July 2000	<p>The leaders head off to a hastily prepared summit at Camp David. Issues never before discussed at senior levels between Israelis and Palestinians -- Jerusalem, statehood, boundaries, refugees -- are put on the table.</p> <p>To break the impasse over the West Bank, Clinton proposes a compromise: Israel would return almost all of the West Bank and Gaza to the Palestinians; the two sides would swap small parcels of land important to each other; and they would agree to share control of Jerusalem. Barak uses Clinton's proposal as a starting point and suggests several changes. Arafat never replies and Barak then refuses to negotiate with Arafat directly.</p> <p>When Clinton returns to Camp David from a trip to Okinawa, Jerusalem is again put on the table. Arafat argues that the Jews have no claim at all to the area of the Temple Mount. On the last night of the talks, Clinton offers a new bridging proposal that covers all the issues, including the main stumbling block of East Jerusalem. But Arafat refuses any compromise over the Temple Mount and is concerned with limits on the sovereignty for the new Palestinian entity (the Clinton/Barak plan would have left the new Palestinian state with significant loss of water and good land, almost split by Israeli annexation running east from Jerusalem, and with Israel getting roughly 9 percent of the West Bank). Arafat rejects the proposal.</p> <p>Arafat returns home to a hero's welcome. Calls for an uprising -- a new intifada -- are heavy in the air. Despite the official demise of the talks, Arafat and Barak approve a new series of secret meetings between the negotiators.</p>
Arafat Visits Barak's Private Residence	25 Sep 2000	<p>Arafat visits Barak at his private residence. According to many of those present, the meeting goes well. At the end of the evening, Arafat makes a request of Barak: that Ariel Sharon, the head of Israel's right-wing party, be denied permission to visit the Temple Mount. Barak, however, cannot prevent Sharon's visit. Instead, he coordinates with the Palestinian Authority, which agrees to try to keep peace in the area.</p>
Sharon Visits the Temple Mount; Al Aqsa Intifada is Born	28 Sep 2000	<p>The Al Aqsa intifada, or uprising, is born as a result of Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. By day's end, seven protestors are dead and 160 injured. The riots spread quickly throughout the West Bank and Gaza and engulf the Israeli Arab community as well. After a week of fighting, 50 Palestinians and five Israelis are dead.</p>
Israeli Reservists Killed; Israel Launches	12 Oct 2000	<p>Two Israeli reservists accidentally stray into Palestinian territory and are lynched by a Palestinian mob. Israel blames the Palestinian Authority for the murders and within hours attack-helicopters destroy the police station, the site of the lynching. Israel also launches massive attacks on other</p>

Massive Assault		<p>targets in Gaza and the West Bank.</p> <p>In Israel, Barak's policies are blamed for the rapidly deteriorating situation. Even among his staunchest supporters, many now distrust the Palestinians' intentions.</p>
Barak Announces Resignation	9 Dec 2000	<p>By resigning Barak obtains a window of 60 days to regain support before standing for reelection. But the violence has made his pro-negotiation stance difficult to defend.</p> <p>Likud leader Sharon -- the hard-line former general whose visit to the Temple Mount sparked the intifada -- runs on a platform of security and is far ahead in the polls. Barak's only hope is to conclude a deal with the Palestinians quickly.</p>
The Taba Talks	21-27 Jan 2001	<p>In a desperate attempt to salvage the peace effort before Israel's election (hard-liner Ariel Sharon was forecast to defeat Barak) negotiators met in the Egyptian resort of Taba, focusing on new parameters for an agreement which had been developed by Clinton the previous month. The new terms went further than what Israel and the U.S. had offered at Camp David.</p> <p>In contrast to Camp David, the Palestinians this time made counter-offers. After a week of off-and-on negotiations, senior Palestinian and Israeli negotiators announced they had never been more close to reaching agreement on final-status issues. But they had run out of political time. They couldn't conclude an agreement with Clinton now out of office and Barak standing for reelection in two weeks. "We made progress, substantial progress. We are closer than ever to the possibility of striking a final deal," said Shlomo Ben-Ami, Israel's negotiator. Saeb Erekat, Palestinian chief negotiator, said, "My heart aches because I know we were so close. We need six more weeks to conclude the drafting of the agreement."</p>
After Taba	Feb 2001	<p>Two weeks after the negotiations at Taba, hard-liner Ariel Sharon was elected prime minister, defeating Barak in a landslide. Sharon had consistently rejected the Oslo peace process and criticized Israel's positions at Camp David and Taba.</p> <p>The Palestinian intifada's cycle of violence continued and escalated. On March 29, 2002, after a suicide bomber killed 30 people, Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield. Israel's troops re-entered Palestinian cities and refugee camps, hunting down terrorists and often leaving massive destruction in their wake.</p> <p>Three months later, in mid-June 2002, two more suicide bombings struck Israel. Sharon announced Israel would immediately begin a policy of taking back land in the West Bank, and holding it, until the terror attacks stopped.</p>
Israel Launches Operation Defensive Shield	29 Mar 2002	<p>Two days after a suicide bomber explodes himself in a Netanya hotel on Passover and kills 30 people, Israel launches Operation Defensive Shield. With overwhelming force, Israeli troops reenter Palestinian cities and refugee camps, hunting down terrorists and often leaving massive destruction in their wake. In Ramallah, Israeli forces enter Arafat's compound and hold him captive and isolated for 31 days.</p>
Two Suicide Bombings in Jerusalem; Israel Begins Retaking West Bank Land	Jun 19-20 2002	<p>Two bombings kill more than two dozen Israelis in Jerusalem. Arafat denounces the attacks, saying they "have nothing to do with our national rights in legitimate resistance to Israeli</p>

		<p>occupation." Sharon announces Israel will immediately begin a policy of retaking land in the West Bank, and holding it, until the terror attacks stop.</p>
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Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

We will meet that threat now with our Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard, and Marines, so that we do not have to meet it later with armies of fire fighters and police and doctors on the streets of our cities.

President George Bush
19 March 2003

American airpower has come a very long way since the 1st Aero Squadron's foray into the badlands of Mexico in search of Pancho Villa. Consider for a moment the first sortie into enemy territory flown by Lieutenant Edgar S. Gorrell. Forced to take off from New Mexico late in the day, nightfall descended on Gorrell and the rest of the American formation of JN-3 Jenny's. In the darkness, Gorrell lost sight of the formation and was soon flying alone. To make matters worse, Gorrell had never flown at night (thus, had never landed at night either) and his engine began to overheat. As Gary Glynn describes, "Finally, hopelessly lost...the young pilot brought the crippled plane in for a rough but successful landing by moonlight. Gorrell knew that he was deep within enemy territory - territory occupied by the mounted and heavily armed followers of . . . 'Pancho' Villa. He drew his .45-caliber pistol, abandoned his plane and fled into the darkness."⁵¹³

In contrast, airpower today is an invaluable tool in the fight of our time – the war on terrorism. The RAND Corporation says, "The speed and agility of aerospace power, combined with its ability to deliver firepower precisely and with minimized risk to U.S. personnel across the spectrum of the conflict, often make it the military instrument of choice for decision makers."⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, it appears that the war on terrorism will go

⁵¹³ Description of the 1st Aero Squadron and Lt Gorrell from Gary Glynn, "1st Aero Squadron in Pursuit of Pancho Villa," *The History Net*, n.p., on-line, Internet, 18 December 2002, available from <http://military.history.about.com/library/prm/blpanchovilla1.htm>.

⁵¹⁴ "Aerospace Operations in Urban Environments," RAND (Santa Monica, CA.: RAND, 2000), XX.

on for quite some time, some say the fight will go on for decades, if not indefinitely. These two facts wed airpower and terrorism together for the foreseeable future.

The Cases In Review

As the case studies in this work demonstrate, airpower has been used at different times and in different ways by many nations to combat terrorism. Though this work addressed three specific cases, many more exist. The first case addressed was President Reagan's decision to launch airpower as a retaliatory and, hopefully, deterrent strike against past and future Libyan sponsored terrorism. Operation El Dorado Canyon showed what American airpower was capable of doing – flying from both carriers and distant airfields and precisely engaging enemy targets with minimal loss of friendly forces.

As a state-sponsor of terrorism, Libya offered American planners multiple lucrative targets. This is a significant lesson learned. State-sponsors of terrorism are vulnerable to coercive attacks designed to change their behavior. In Qadhafi's case, he was quite active in his support and participation in international terrorism. Terrorism offered him a way to strike at his enemies, while maintaining a thin veil of innocence designed to keep him one step ahead of retribution. Once President Reagan had irrefutable proof that Qadhafi was responsible for the Berlin disco bombing, the veil of innocence was removed. Libya, as a state, offered multiple targets that were valuable to Qadhafi. Command and control facilities, terrorist training facilities and Qadhafi's newest fighter aircraft were struck. Having been struck once – and struck hard – Qadhafi came to realize that his prize assets, his reputation, and perhaps his position of power were in jeopardy.

Also, the international or third party impact that El Dorado Canyon had was significant. First, it forced our allies to assess their position on terrorism. Margaret Thatcher had the courage to stand by America's side – reinforcing a strong bond of support between our two Nations that can be seen today. Libyan diplomats in Europe with ties to terrorism were expelled. Significantly, the airstrikes forced the USSR, Libya's supporter, to distance itself from the Qadhafi. One of the main reasons that other European nations such as France and Germany did not stand with America was a fear of

retribution attacks. These attacks never materialized. Also, the fear that Qadhafi would be made a hero in the Arab world was unfounded. Most Arab nations felt that Qadhafi had brought the retribution upon himself and that he deserved it. Rather than side with Qadhafi, leaders quietly expressed their support for America through back channels. Further, Arab masses did not take to the streets in significant numbers.

Thus, it appears that America reacted for the right reasons with an appropriate response. American airpower delivered a well-orchestrated, punishing blow to Qadhafi. President Reagan showed Qadhafi that, under his watch, he would not tolerate his actions. Domestically, President Reagan's response reassured America that a rogue tyrant would not bully our Nation. Regrettably, two airmen lost their lives, but America recognized that stopping Qadhafi was worth the loss of life.

The second case study introduced was Operation Infinite Reach. This was the American response, under President Bill Clinton, to the continued al Qaeda attacks culminating with the 1998 Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. As with the case of Libya, America had been subjected to a series of damaging terrorist attacks, this time under the direction of Usama bin Ladin. Again, America had a smoking gun, directly linking the crime to the perpetrators. However, this is where the similarities between the two cases stop.

Sadly, while effective at hitting their targets, the hundreds of millions of dollars of cruise missiles fired into Afghanistan and Sudan had little impact. In Afghanistan, one primitive terrorist training facility was struck. This attack destroyed several mud huts and killed a handful of low-level terrorists. In Sudan, a pharmaceutical plant alleged to have been making chemical weapons was leveled, but the debate as to its legitimacy as a target continues today. Clearly, this was a pinprick to al Qaeda and was received by them as a most welcome response. They had directly engaged America by simultaneously bombing two of our embassies and killing hundreds of innocent civilians many of whom were American citizens or employees. This was bin Ladin's public announcement to the world of, to use fighter pilot vernacular, "*Fight's on.*" In response to this naked aggression, Operation Infinite Reach responded with a single volley of unmanned cruise missiles at inconsequential targets. Our actions made us look weak.

Key differences emerge between Qadhafi and bin Ladin. Qadhafi was a leader of a recognized state. Second, as was previously noted, Qadhafi could be coerced - his assets, his reputation, and perhaps his life could and would be targeted. Maintaining his position as the leader of Libya was more important than his open support for terrorism. In contrast, our weak response did not threaten bin Ladin. It is implausible to think that one airstrike, against inconsequential targets, could coerce bin Ladin to suddenly stop his publicly stated war on America. Terrorism is bin Ladin's most effective tool in his war against America. Bin Ladin openly embraces terrorism, calling it a religious duty. Further, terrorism allows him to asymmetrically engage the world's only super-power, thereby making it look weak. Also, the few mud huts destroyed were inconsequential to bin Ladin. Trading a few such targets for the ability to make America look impotent was a resounding public relations victory.

Two different courses of action (COA) would have provided a more appropriate response to al Qaeda. First, persistent and comprehensive air operations directed at all known al Qaeda facilities in Afghanistan, to include assassination attempts on bin Ladin and his deputies, could have killed more al Qaeda members. Further, this would have reduced their training output, introduced friction into their daily operations and may have coerced the Taliban into reigning in or expelling bin Ladin. Regardless, persistent air attacks would have denied al Qaeda the free operating environment they enjoyed from 1998 until October 2001. This first COA would have needed to be executed by manned aircraft as well as cruise missiles. The second COA we could have pursued was a joint airpower and special operations ground attack aimed to capture and kill al Qaeda members. Prisoners could have provided a trove of intelligence used to thwart future operations. These COAs clearly would have put more American lives at risk as well as presenting other problems (crossing Pakistani airspace to get to Afghanistan, etc.). In the end, these counter-arguments won out and the cruise missile response was selected. Quite possibly, 9-11 could have been averted if we had done more.

Thus, a significant lesson learned from Operation Infinite Reach is that traditional terrorists offer little with which to coerce them. Military power is a necessary tool, but rather than being used to threaten and intimidate, the best response is to hunt them down, dismantle their support structures and introduce friction into their daily operations. In

most cases, this will require the combined use of air and land military power (as seen in the Israeli discussion, our current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq). Further, diplomatic efforts need to be used to isolate the terrorists and their cause while police and intelligence assets interact with the military to find, arrest, or eliminate the terrorists.

The final case study looked at the Israeli use of airpower against the Palestinians in the current Intifada. Unlike the prior cases studied, the IDF use of airpower is part of a combined arms offensive. In many ways, airpower has done exactly what Israel has asked of it. Initially, it allowed the IDF to engage the terrorists from a medium that the Palestinians could not challenge - the air. This was done in an effort to minimize the use of ground forces and subsequent IDF casualties. As the Israelis became more aggressive with their ground incursions into the occupied territories, airpower provided superior covering fire and intelligence. Further, the Israelis have provided a model of how to combine air and ground power in urban environments. Their use of UAVs for intelligence and tactical guidance, as well as gunship support, are quite effective.

This chapter also brings to light the “David and Goliath syndrome.” Beginning in Lebanon, the PLO regularly broke international law by placing military targets near non-combatants in hopes of luring the IDF into a public affairs trap. Arafat is a master at taking advantage of the sympathetic press and United Nations. He learned these skills in Lebanon and uses them today. The images of Arafat pleading for international support and understanding on CNN are quite common – he always portrays the Palestinians as the weak and downtrodden underdog. Thus, image of the powerful IDF being used against poorly armed Palestinians is a powerful asymmetrical tool. The use of IDF airpower against the Palestinians is portrayed, and often seen, as the most excessive use of sophisticated military might. Clearly, this resonates with the American position today and in the future. As the Bush Doctrine allows us to preemptively engage our enemies around the globe, we too will face this challenge. Saddam Hussein used this in the first Gulf War. Military planners will be compelled to try to limit non-combatant casualties, while our enemies try to increase them. In short, we should anticipate being held to a double standard.

Further, airpower as well as ground power has, to date, failed to provide a coercive lever with which to make Yassar Arafat crackdown on terrorism. Analysis

showed that this is unlikely to occur with a leader that has, at best, a tenuous grasp on power. In Arafat's case, the growing movement of Palestinian Islamic militants, such as Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the external influence of Hizbullah, force him to walk a balancing act between the Israelis on one side and the extremists on the other. Concessions too far in either direction threaten his position of power. In this case, military power has curbed terrorism, but not secured peace.

These case studies provide a spectrum of response options that can be employed against terrorism. On the ineffectual side of the spectrum is Operation Infinite Reach. In this case, cruise missiles were used more for domestic consumption than against the enemy. Next, Operation El Dorado Canyon, also an airpower only response, was an effective response because it directly threatened a targetable center of gravity. Further, it was a significant military response that plausibly signaled our resolve to escalate if necessary. Representing the most aggressive side of the spectrum is the Israeli use of airpower combined with ground forces (that include the army, police, secret-police, etc.) against the Palestinians in their second Intifada. Without question, leaders must respond to terrorism. However, how they respond must follow a strategic calculus based upon the nature of the threat and the context surrounding the events. This work has shown that leaders have a variety of responses available.

Final Conclusions and Expected Trends

It is clear that our military needs to be prepared to conduct both regular and irregular warfare. As of this writing, events in Operation Iraqi Freedom show that both spectrums of conflict can exist in the same war. Ignoring one of these forms of warfare over the other will prove costly in the future. Furthermore, as our remains strong relative to our enemies, the enemy will seek asymmetric methods with which to engage us. Clearly, terrorism is one such method. Terrorism attacks will also have increased significance when terrorists obtain and employ WMD. The psychological value of employing WMD makes it too attractive an alternative to pass up.

America has set a course that directly engages terrorism. The Bush Doctrine lays out a policy of attacking terrorists with the desire, means, and capability of harming

American citizens and our interests. Furthermore, America will no longer wait for an attack prior to acting against an identified threat. Under the Bush administration policy, preemptive action is now authorized. Military operations in these actions can take many forms. In some cases, such as with the Hellfire missile targeting of the al Qaeda terrorists in the Yemeni desert, airpower will operate alone. From the broader perspective, airpower will be used in joint operations against terrorists. However, in these joint operations, airpower will often be a first responder.

This work has identified several key points drawn from the three case studies analyzed. While these points cannot be applied to all scenarios due to potential contextual differences, they are worthy of consideration. These will be addressed in the order in which they appear in this work.

First, coercion through decapitation and denial attacks against state-sponsors of terrorism may be effective if military force is decisively applied against the enemy leadership and the assets they deem valuable. Further, strikes against leaders of state-sponsored terrorism do not necessarily raise enemy leaders to “hero status” or spawn large spread popular revolts.

Next, shadowy networks such as al Qaeda cannot be coerced with limited airstrikes. Rather, persistent airstrikes as part of a combined operations approach are required. The focus in this effort is not coercion, rather direct engagement via a denial and decapitation strategy. When used in conjunction with international law enforcement efforts, diplomacy, etc., this approach can inject friction into the terrorists’ lives and operations thereby reducing their effectiveness.

In addition, nations must respond to terrorist attacks waged against them. To not do so invites more such attacks. In a democracy, leaders cannot ignore the domestic reaction of their military response. All three case studies show that the citizenry of democratic nations support strikes against terrorists. However, strikes designed for little more than signaling resolve to the domestic audience while ignoring the message sent to the enemy can be quite dangerous and embolden the enemy to further, more damaging attacks.

Another key lesson is that the “David and Goliath effect” is still alive and well. Powerful nations, such as America, can anticipate being ruthlessly and critically

scrutinized by the press, the United Nations, and the world's population at large when engaging smaller enemies. Furthermore, we can anticipate a double standard to be applied. Breaches in international law by our opponent will be overlooked while our conduct will be examined under a microscope. However, this should not dissuade us from engaging our enemies as they would hope. Instead, we need to be trained, equipped, and prepared to execute these missions. In fighting terrorist groups, increased urban operations are likely. In this environment, we will have to be more surgical – blunt tactics employed for the traditional battlefield will have a significant public opinion backlash due to the “CNN effect.” However, no matter how precise we become, we will never be able to completely eliminate collateral damage.

Airpower offers civil and military leaders a powerful tool with which to fight terrorism. Often, due to its speed, range and flexibility, airpower will be the first military tool utilized. However, this work, and world events, show that the application of military force alone cannot *win* this war against terrorism. This final lesson cannot be over-emphasized. Military force cannot “drain the swamp” that breeds hatred, violence and death. The military can strike at the dangerous creatures that live in and slither out of the swamp, but it cannot eliminate the “ecosystem” of hate and misery that breeds all of this. While airpower and the other military forms of power provide a way to check terrorism, diplomacy and statecraft will have to address the many difficult issues that foster terrorism.

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